

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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## GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

### CHAPTER XI.

At the appointed time I returned to Miss Havisham's, and my hesitating ring at the gate brought out Estella. She locked it after admitting me, as she had done before, and again preceded me into the dark passage where her candle stood. She took no notice of me until she had the candle in her hand, when she looked over her shoulder, superciliously saying, "You are to come this way to-day," and took me to quite another part of the house.

The passage was a long one and seemed to pervade the whole square basement of the Manor House. We traversed but one side of the square, however, and at the end of it she stopped, and put her candle down and opened a door. Here, the daylight reappeared, and I found myself in a small paved court-yard, the opposite side of which was formed by a detached dwelling-house, that looked as if it had once belonged to the manager or head clerk of the extinct brewery. There was a clock in the outer wall of this house. Like the clock in Miss Havisham's room and like Miss Havisham's watch, it had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

We went in at the door, which stood open, and into a gloomy room with a low ceiling, on the ground floor at the back. There was some company in the room, and Estella said to me as she joined it, "You are to go and stand there, boy, till you are wanted." "There," being the window, I crossed to it, and stood "there," in a very uncomfortable state of mind, looking out.

It opened to the ground, and looked into a most miserable corner of the neglected garden, upon a rank ruin of cabbage-stalks, and one box-tree that had been clipped round long ago, like a pudding, and had a new growth at the top of it, out of shape and of a different colour, as if that part of the pudding had stuck to the saucepan and got burnt. This was my homely thought, as I contemplated the box-tree. There had been some light snow over-night, and it lay nowhere else to my knowledge; but, it had not quite melted from the cold shadow of this bit of garden, and the wind caught it up in little eddies and threw it at the window, as if it pelted me for coming there.

I divined that my coming had stopped conversation in the room, and that its other occupants were looking at me. I could see nothing of the room except the shining of the fire in the window-glass, but I stiffened in all my joints with the consciousness that I was under close inspection.

There were three ladies in the room and one gentleman. Before I had been standing at the window five minutes, they somehow conveyed to me that they were all toadies and humbugs, but that each of them pretended not to know that the others were toadies and humbugs: because the admission that he or she did know it, would have made him or her out to be a toady and humbug.

They all had a listless and dreary air of waiting somebody's pleasure, and the most talkative of the ladies had to speak quite rigidly to repress a yawn. This lady, whose name was Camilla, very much reminded me of my sister, with the difference that she was older and (as I found when I caught sight of her) of a blunter cast of features. Indeed, when I knew her better I began to think it was a Mercy she had any features at all, so very blank and high was the dead wall of her face.

"Poor dear soul!" said this lady, with an abruptness of manner quite my sister's. "Nobody's enemy but his own!"

"It would be much more commendable to be somebody else's enemy," said the gentleman; "far more natural."

"Cousin John," observed another lady, "we are to love our neighbour."

"Sarah Pocket," returned Cousin John, "if a man is not his own neighbour, who is?"

Miss Pocket laughed, and Camilla laughed and said (checking a yawn), "The idea!" But I thought they seemed to think it rather a good idea too. The other lady who had not spoken yet, said gravely and emphatically, "Very true!"

"Poor soul!" Camilla presently went on (I knew they had all been looking at me in the mean time), "he is so very strange! Would any one believe that when Tom's wife died, he actually could not be induced to see the importance of the children's having the deepest of trimmings to their mourning? 'Good Lord!' says he, 'Camilla, what can it signify so long as the poor bereaved little things are in black?' So like Matthew! The idea!"

"Good points in him; good points in him,"

said Cousin John; "Heaven forbid I should deny good points in him; but he never had, and he never will have, any sense of the proprieties."

"You know I was obliged," said Camilla, "I was obliged to be firm. I said, 'It will not do for the credit of the family.' I told him that, without deep trimmings, the family was disgraced. I cried about it from breakfast till dinner. I injured my digestion. And at last he flung out in his violent way, and said with a D, 'Then do as you like.' Thank Goodness it will always be a consolation to me to know that I instantly went out in a pouring rain and bought the things."

"He paid for them, did he not?" asked Estella.

"It's not the question, my dear child, who paid for them," returned Camilla, "I bought them. And I shall often think of that with peace, when I wake up in the night."

The ringing of a distant bell, combined with the echoing of some cry or call along the passage by which I had come, interrupted the conversation and caused Estella to say to me, "Now, boy!" On my turning round, they all looked at me with the utmost contempt, and, as I went out, I heard Sarah Pocket say, "Well I am sure! What next!" and Camilla add, with indignation, "Was there ever such a fancy! The i-de-a!"

As we were going with our candle along the dark passage, Estella stopped all of a sudden, and facing round said in her taunting manner with her face quite close to mine:

"Well?"

"Well, miss?" I answered, almost falling over her and checking myself.

She stood looking at me, and, of course, I stood looking at her.

"Am I pretty?"

"Yes; I think you are very pretty."

"Am I insulting?"

"Not so much so as you were last time," said I.

"Not so much so?"

"No."

She fired when she asked the last question, and she slapped my face with such force as she had, when I answered it.

"Now?" said she. "You little coarse monster, what do you think of me now?"

"I shall not tell you."

"Because you are going to tell, up-stairs. Is that it?"

"No," said I, "that's not it."

"Why don't you cry again, you little wretch?"

"Because I'll never cry for you again," said I. Which was, I suppose, as false a declaration as ever was made; for I was inwardly crying for her then, and I know what I know of the pain she cost me afterwards.

We went on our way up-stairs after this episode; and, as we were going up, we met a gentleman groping his way down.

"Who have we here?" asked the gentleman, stopping and looking at me.

"A boy," said Estella.

He was a burly man of an exceedingly dark complexion, with an exceedingly large head and a correspondingly large hand. He took my chin in his large hand and turned up my face to have a look at me by the light of the candle. He was prematurely bald on the top of his head, and had bushy black eyebrows that wouldn't lie down but stood up bristling. His eyes were set very deep in his head, and were disagreeably sharp and suspicious. He had a large watch-chain, and strong black dots where his beard and whiskers would have been if he had let them. He was nothing to me, and I could have had no foresight then, that he ever would be anything to me, but it happened that I had this opportunity of observing him well.

"Boy of the neighbourhood? Hey?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said I.

"How do *you* come here?"

"Miss Havisham sent for me, sir," I explained.

"Well! Behave yourself. I have a pretty large experience of boys, and you're a bad set of fellows. Now mind!" said he, biting the side of his great forefinger as he frowned at me, "you behave yourself!"

With those words, he released me—which I was glad of, for his hand smelt of scented soap—and went his way down stairs. I wondered whether he could be a doctor; but no, I thought; he couldn't be a doctor, or he would have a quieter and more persuasive manner. There was not much time to consider the subject, for we were soon in Miss Havisham's room, where she and everything else were just as I had left them. Estella left me standing near the door, and I stood there until Miss Havisham cast her eyes upon me from the dressing-table.

"So!" she said, without being startled or surprised; "the days have worn away, have they?"

"Yes, ma'am. To-day is——"

"There, there, there!" with the impatient movement of her fingers. "I don't want to know. Are you ready to play?"

I was obliged to answer in some confusion,

"I don't think I am, ma'am."

"Not at cards again?" she demanded, with a searching look.

"Yes, ma'am; I could do that, if I was wanted."

"Since this house strikes you old and grave, boy," said Miss Havisham, impatiently, "and you are unwilling to play, are you willing to work?"

I could answer this inquiry with a better heart than I had been able to find for the other question, and I said I was quite willing.

"Then go into that opposite room," said she, pointing at the door behind me with her withered hand, "and wait there till I come."

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive. A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-

fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air—like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber: or it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable, and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstance of the greatest public importance had just transpired in the spider community.

I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels, as if the same occurrence were important to their interests. But, the black-beetles took no notice of the agitation, and groped about the hearth in a ponderous elderly way, as if they were short-sighted and hard of hearing, and not on terms with one another.

These crawling things had fascinated my attention and I was watching them from a distance, when Miss Havisham laid a hand upon my shoulder. In her other hand she had a crutch-headed stick on which she leaned, and she looked like the Witch of the Place.

"This," said she, pointing to the long table with her stick, "is where I will be laid when I am dead. They shall come and look at me here."

With some vague misgiving that she might get upon the table then and there and die at once, the complete realisation of the ghastly waxwork at the Fair, I shrank under her touch.

"What do you think that is?" she asked me, again pointing with her stick; "that, where those cobwebs are?"

"I can't guess what it is, ma'am."

"It's a great cake. A bride-cake. Mine!"

She looked all round the room in a glaring manner, and then said, leaning on me while her hand twitched my shoulder, "Come, come, come! Walk me, walk me!"

I made out from this, that the work I had to do, was to walk Miss Havisham round and round the room. Accordingly, I started at once, and she leaned upon my shoulder, and we went away at a pace that might have been an imitation (founded on my first impulse under that roof) of Mr. Pumblechook's chaise-cart.

She was not physically strong, and after a little time she said "Slower!" Still, we went at an impatient stilted speed, and as we went, she twitched the hand upon my shoulder, and worked her mouth, and led me to believe

that we were going fast because her thoughts went fast. After a while she said, "Call Estella!" so I went out on the landing and roared that name as I had done on the previous occasion. When her light appeared, I returned to Miss Havisham, and we started away again round and round the room.

If only Estella had come to be a spectator of our proceedings, I should have felt sufficiently discontented; but, as she brought with her the three ladies and the gentleman whom I had seen below, I didn't know what to do. In my politeness, I would have stopped; but, Miss Havisham twitched my shoulder, and we posted on—with a shamefaced consciousness on my part that they would think it was all my doing.

"Dear Miss Havisham," said Miss Sarah Pocket. "How well you look!"

"I do not," returned Miss Havisham. "I am yellow skin and bone."

Camilla brightened when Miss Pocket met with this rebuff; and she murmured, as she plaintively contemplated Miss Havisham, "Poor dear soul! Certainly not to be expected to look well, poor thing. The idea!"

"And how are *you*?" said Miss Havisham to Camilla. As we were close to Camilla then, I would have stopped as a matter of course, only Miss Havisham wouldn't stop. We swept on, and I felt that I was highly obnoxious to Camilla.

"Thank you, Miss Havisham," she returned, "I am as well as can be expected."

"Why, what's the matter with you?" asked Miss Havisham, with exceeding sharpness.

"Nothing worth mentioning," replied Camilla. "I don't wish to make a display of my feelings, but I have habitually thought of you more in the night than I am quite equal to."

"Then don't think of me," retorted Miss Havisham.

"Very easily said!" remarked Camilla, amiably repressing a sob, while a hitch came into her upper lip, and her tears overflowed. "Raymond is a witness what ginger and sal volatile I am obliged to take in the night. Raymond is a witness what nervous jerkings I have in my legs. Chokings and nervous jerkings, however, are nothing new to me when I think with anxiety of those I love. If I could be less affectionate and sensitive, I should have a better digestion and an iron set of nerves. I am sure I wish it could be so. But as to not thinking of you in the night—The idea!" Here, a burst of tears.

The Raymond referred to, I understood to be the gentleman present, and him I understood to be Mr. Camilla. He came to the rescue at this point, and said in a consolatory and complimentary voice, "Camilla, my dear, it is well known that your family feelings are gradually undermining you to the extent of making one of your legs shorter than the other."

"I am not aware," observed the grave lady whose voice I had heard but once, "that to think of any person is to make a great claim upon that person, my dear."

Miss Sarah Pocket, whom I now saw to be a

little dry brown corrugated old woman, with a small face that might have been made of walnut-shells, and a large mouth like a cat's without the whiskers, supported this position by saying "No, indeed, my dear. Hem!"

"Thinking is easy enough," said the grave lady.

"What is easier, you know?" assented Miss Sarah Pocket.

"Oh yes, yes!" cried Camilla, whose fermenting feelings appeared to rise from her legs to her bosom. "It's all very true! It's a weakness to be so affectionate, but I can't help it. No doubt my health would be much better if it was otherwise, still I wouldn't change my disposition if I could. It's the cause of much suffering, but it's a consolation to know I possess it, when I wake up in the night." Here another burst of feeling.

Miss Havisham and I had never stopped all this time, but kept going round and round the room: now, brushing against the skirts of the visitors, and now giving them the whole length of the dismal chamber.

"There's Matthew!" said Camilla. "Never mixing with any natural ties, never coming here to see how Miss Havisham is! I have taken to the sofa with my staylace cut, and have lain there hours, insensible, with my head over the side, and my hair all down, and my feet I don't know where——"

"Much higher than your head, my love," said Mr. Camilla.)

"I have gone off into that state, hours and hours, on account of Matthew's strange and inexplicable conduct, and nobody has thanked me."

"Really I must say I should think not!" interposed the grave lady.

"You see, my dear," added Miss Sarah Pocket (a blandly vicious personage), "the question to put to yourself is, who did you expect to thank you, my love?"

"Without expecting any thanks, or anything of the sort," resumed Camilla, "I have remained in that state, hours and hours, and Raymond is a witness of the extent to which I have choked, and what the total inefficacy of ginger has been, and I have been heard at the pianoforte-tuner's across the street, where the poor mistaken children have even supposed it to be pigeons cooing at a distance—and now to be told——" Here Camilla put her hand to her throat, and began to be quite chemical as to the formation of new combinations there.

When this same Matthew was mentioned, Miss Havisham stopped me and herself, and stood looking at the speaker. This change had a great influence in bringing Camilla's chemistry to a sudden end.

"Matthew will come and see me at last," said Miss Havisham, sternly, "when I am laid on that table. That will be his place—there," striking the table with her stick, "at my head! And yours will be there! And your husband's there! And Sarah Pocket's there! And Georgiana's there! Now you all know where to take your stations when you come to feast upon me. And now go!"

At the mention of each name, she had struck the table with her stick in a new place. She now said, "Walk me, walk me!" and we went on again.

"I suppose there's nothing to be done," exclaimed Camilla, "but comply and depart. It's something to have seen the object of one's love and duty, for even so short a time. I shall think of it with a melancholy satisfaction when I wake up in the night. I wish Matthew could have that comfort, but he sets it at defiance. I am determined not to make a display of my feelings, but it's very hard to be told one wants to feast on one's relations—as if one was a Giant—and to be told to go. The bare idea!"

Mr. Camilla interposing, as Mrs. Camilla laid her hand upon her heaving bosom, that lady assumed an unnatural fortitude of manner which I supposed to be expressive of an intention to drop and choke when out of view, and kissing her hand to Miss Havisham, was escorted forth. Sarah Pocket and Georgiana contended who should remain last; but, Sarah was too knowing to be outdone, and ambled round Georgiana with that artful slipperiness, that the latter was obliged to take precedence. Sarah Pocket then made her separate effect of departing with "Bless you, Miss Havisham dear!" and with a smile of forgiving pity on her walnut-shell countenance for the weaknesses of the rest.

While Estella was away lighting them down, Miss Havisham still walked with her hand on my shoulder, but more and more slowly. At last she stopped before the fire, and said, after muttering and looking at it some seconds:

"This is my birthday, Pip."

I was going to wish her many happy returns, when she lifted her stick.

"I don't suffer it to be spoken of. I don't suffer those who were here just now, or any one, to speak of it. They come here on the day, but they dare not refer to it."

Of course I made no further effort to refer to it.

"On this day of the year, long before you were born, this heap of decay," stabbing with her crutched stick at the pile of cobwebs on the table but not touching it, "was brought here. It and I have worn away together. The mice have gnawed at it, and sharper teeth than teeth of mice have gnawed at me."

She held the head of her stick against her heart as she stood looking at the table; she in her once white dress, all yellow and withered; the once white cloth all yellow and withered; everything around, in a state to crumble under a touch.

"When the ruin is complete," said she, with a ghastly look, "and when they lay me dead in my bride's dress on the bride's table—which shall be done, and which will be the finished curse upon him—so much the better if it is on this day!"

She stood looking at the table as if she stood looking at her own figure lying there. I remained quiet. Estella returned, and she too remained quiet. It seemed to me that we continued thus for a long time. In the heavy air of the room,



and the heavy darkness that brooded in its remoter corners, I even had an alarming fancy that Estella and I would presently begin to decay.

At length, not coming out of her distraught state by degrees, but in an instant, Miss Havisham said, "Let me see you two play cards; why have you not begun?" With that, we returned to her room, and sat down as before; I was beggared, as before; and again, as before, Miss Havisham watched us all the time, directed my attention to Estella's beauty, and made me notice it the more by trying her jewels on Estella's breast and hair.

Estella, for her part, likewise treated me as before; except that she did not condescend to speak. When we had played some half-dozen games, a day was appointed for my return, and I was taken down into the yard to be fed in the former dog-like manner. There, too, I was again left to wander about as I liked.

It is not much to the purpose whether a gate in that garden wall which I had scrambled up to peep over on the last occasion was, on that last occasion, open or shut. Enough that I saw no gate then, and that I saw one now. As it stood open, and as I knew that Estella had let the visitors out—for, she had returned with the keys in her hand—I strolled into the garden and strolled all over it. It was quite a wilderness, and there were old melon-frames and cucumber-frames in it, which seemed in their decline to have produced a spontaneous growth of weak attempts at pieces of old hats and boots, with now and then a weedy offshoot into the likeness of a battered saucepan.

When I had exhausted the garden, and a greenhouse with nothing in it but a fallen-down grape-vine and some bottles, I found myself in the dismal corner upon which I had looked out of window. Never questioning for a moment that the house was now empty, I looked in at another window, and found myself, to my great surprise, exchanging a broad stare with a pale young gentleman with red eyelids and light hair.

This pale young gentleman quickly disappeared, and reappeared beside me. He had been at his books when I had found myself staring at him, and I now saw that he was inky.

"Halloa!" said he, "young fellow!"

Halloa being a general observation which I have usually observed to be best answered by itself, I said "Halloa!" politely omitting young fellow.

"Who let you in?" said he.

"Miss Estella."

"Who gave you leave to prowl about?"

"Miss Estella."

"Come and fight," said the pale young gentleman.

What could I do but follow him? I have often asked myself the question since: but, what else could I do? His manner was so final, and I was so astonished, that I followed where he led, as if I had been under a spell.

"Stop a minute, though," he said, wheeling round before we had gone many paces. "I ought to give you a reason for fighting, too.

There it is!" In a most irritating manner he instantly slapped his hands against one another, daintily flung one of his legs up behind him, pulled my hair, slapped his hands again, dipped his head, and butted it into my stomach.

The bull-like proceeding last mentioned, besides that it was unquestionably to be regarded in the light of a liberty, was particularly disagreeable just after bread and meat. I therefore hit out at him and was going to hit out again, when he said, "Aha! Would you?" and began dancing backwards and forwards in a manner quite unparalleled within my limited experience.

"Laws of the game!" said he. Here, he skipped from his left leg on to his right. "Regular rules!" Here, he skipped from his right leg on to his left. "Come to the ground, and go through the preliminaries!" Here, he dodged backwards and forwards, and did all sorts of things while I looked helplessly at him.

I was secretly afraid of him when I saw him so dexterous; but, I felt morally and physically convinced that his light head of hair could have had no business in the pit of my stomach, and that I had a right to consider it irrelevant when so obtruded on my attention. Therefore, I followed him without a word, to a retired nook of the garden formed by the junction of two walls and screened by some rubbish. On his asking me if I was satisfied with the ground, and on my replying Yes, he begged my leave to absent himself for a moment, and quickly returned with a bottle of water and a sponge dipped in vinegar. "Available for both," he said, placing these against the wall. And then fell to pulling off, not only his jacket and waistcoat, but his shirt too, in a manner at once light-hearted, business-like, and bloodthirsty.

Although he did not look very healthy—having pimples on his face, and a breaking out at his mouth—these dreadful preparations quite appalled me. I judged him to be about my own age, but he was much taller, and he had a way of spinning himself about that was full of appearance. For the rest, he was a young gentleman in a grey suit (when not denuded for battle), with his elbows, knees, wrists, and heels, considerably in advance of the rest of him as to development.

My heart failed me when I saw him squaring at me with every demonstration of mechanical nicety and eyeing my anatomy as if he were minutely choosing his bone. I never have been so surprised in my life, as I was when I let out the first blow, and saw him lying on his back looking up at me with a bloody nose and his face exceedingly fore-shortened.

But, he was on his feet directly, and after sponging himself with a great show of dexterity began squaring again. The second greatest surprise I have ever had in my life was seeing him on his back again, looking up at me out of a black eye.

His spirit inspired me with great respect. He seemed to have no strength, and he never once hit me hard, and he was always knocked down; but, he would be up again in a moment, spong-

ing himself or drinking out of the water-bottle, with the greatest satisfaction in seconding himself according to form, and then came at me with an air and a show that made me believe he really was going to do for me at last. He got heavily bruised, for I am sorry to record that the more I hit him, the harder I hit him; but, he came up again and again and again, until at last he got a bad fall with the back of his head against the wall. Even after that crisis in our affairs, he got up and turned round and round confusedly a few times, not knowing where I was; but finally went on his knees to his sponge and threw it up: at the same time panting out, "That means you have won."

He seemed so brave and innocent, that although I had not proposed the contest I felt but a gloomy satisfaction in my victory. Indeed, I go so far as to hope that I regarded myself while dressing as a species of savage young wolf, or other wild beast. However, I got dressed, darkly wiping my sanguinary face at intervals, and I said, "Can I help you?" and he said "No thankee," and I said "Good afternoon," and he said "Same to you."

When I got into the court-yard, I found Estella waiting with the keys. But, she neither asked me where I had been, nor why I had kept her waiting; and there was a bright flush upon her face, as though something had happened to delight her. Instead of going straight to the gate, too, she stepped back into the passage, and beckoned me.

"Come here! You may kiss me, if you like."

I kissed her cheek as she turned it to me. I think I would have gone through a great deal to kiss her cheek. But, I felt that the kiss was given to the coarse common boy as a piece of money might have been, and that it was worth nothing.

What with the birthday visitors, and what with the cards, and what with the fight, my stay had lasted so long, that when I neared home the light on the spit of sand off the point on the marshes was gleaming against a black night-sky, and Joe's furnace was flinging a path of fire across the road.

#### POLICEMEN IN PRUSSIA.

Nor long since I read—in company with other readers of the arch-journal—that tale of the inoffensive British subject who had the misfortune to be travelling with his wife and family on a Prussian railway at the same moment as an ill-omened Prussian doctor. The inoffensive British subject had actually in his pocket a sheet of tissue-paper, or letter of introduction, in which a distinguished personage at home had kindly asked, in general terms, "every one whom it might concern," to take particular care of the person described in the document, as "a British subject travelling on the Continent," and pay him every attention. Fortified with this paper, the British subject had presented it to various parties, whom it did concern, and who had good-naturedly painted little pictures

of split eagles, and crowns, and inscriptions in lamp-black over it, sprinkling it profusely with sand and general dirt. So far the inoffensive British subject was complimentarily treated. But on that unlucky morning, when his seat was taken by the medical practitioner, he himself was dragged away by ruffians in uniform, cast for a week into gaol, and was finally, together with his nation, reviled in foul language by a law officer of the Prussian crown. As I read this gross outrage, a little historiette of personal treatment in my own individual case, at the hands of these gentry, came into my mind.

I am at Calais, where the action of the little piece commences, newly descended from an effete, shattered diligence—last of its tribe—which has jingled over from Boulogne. I have been assisted to the ground by some perilous steps, not unlike a series of hall-door scrapers, and am at once adhered to by a species of human barnacle, or mussel, what seems to be a stud-groom, but is, professionally, a commissioner, and who never leaves me for a second as long as I reside in the town. A gentleman of easy address, and speaking the English tongue with perfect fluency, not to be put back by assurances that his services are not required, by stern request to desist from dogging my steps, and it is with a fiendish joy, when the hour of departure arrives, that I tell him that he shall not have a doit—that he has been forewarned—that he was a nuisance, a pest, a plague. He smiles, and shrugs, and smiles, and is very sorry, but it cannot be helped. He has meant well; and is so seducing, finally, that he goes his way rejoicing, with an ample guerdon.

Then we plunge into the night—the midnight—and with an eternal burr, and huge winnowing machine whirling ceaselessly in the ear, and periodical shiver, and heavy blinking eyes, and uneasy, and inconvenient limbs exploring restlessly, and heads swathed in caps, we make the night express journey through Brussels. In the flash of broad daylight, feeling very cold and creepish, find a new green country, well wooded, swelling in easy hills and valleys, skimming by us; with a perceptible thickening in the clouds of tobacco; with eight little green men winding horns of chase, cheerfully, to one another, from distant extremities of the "convoy;" in short, with a general Prussian flavour over everything.

With a change, too, in company, the sleepy nodding heads, the human pendulums that swung all night long from side to side, and the ten restless legs that searched accommodation all the night long, having vanished utterly, and there were, instead, fresh clean faces, faces that had washed and had been at the steaming breakfast-table, not wholly unconscious of buttered rolls and coffee according to milk, and such delicacies, that looked on new newspapers, and yellow little pirates of English books; English faces, in short—Mr. Blandman, and his two daughters, Miss Blonde and Miss Brunette. These ladies, fresh as daisies, and their father the most placid eye-glassed grey-whiskered and benevolent of

human men, who spent his days, I was positive, in preparing little surprises in the shape of jewellery, dresses, and general decoration, for his two "girls."

Miss Blonde does crochet work, busily; Miss Brunette reads her little yellow pirate; Mr. Blandman pursues his Times newspaper—no older than yesterday week—with much zest and steadiness. He looks hungrily at my journal of that denomination, which was full of youth and freshness, and artfully makes use of it as a lever to an introduction.

In a quarter of an hour the crochet needle is doing its work in a languid halting insufficient manner, and the little yellow pirate rests half closed upon its owner's knee; while a gentleman opposite is relating, with much animation of gesture, passages drawn from his experiences of travel. It is discovered presently that there was a Miss Jenkinwaters of St. John's Wood, whose acquaintance is common both to the gentleman and the young ladies; and the little common memories, domestic incidents of the most trivial nature, that we contrived to hang upon Miss Jenkinwaters of St. John's Wood, seem to me now, to be perfectly surprising; yet then, I was very grateful to Miss Jenkinwaters of St. John's Wood, in that far-off country. "You must come and see us," Mr. Blandman said, warming to me gradually, "at our country place. Stop with us some time. We fill our house at Christmas; have theatricals, charades, hunting, dancing—a regular festival, in short. You *must* come to us and—Hullo! what are we stopping here for?"

The convoy had stopped short in a narrow gorge, with high sloping banks, but without platform or station, beyond a wretched kind of hut, or sentry-box; and, on looking out of the window I could see all the doors open, and a band of the spiked green men crawling up the steps of the carriages. We seemed to be a steam diligence stopped and rifled in a lonely pass of the Abruzzi by bandits. I put this little conceit in a lively manner to my companions, and they were much diverted. It was discovered, however, that we were at that moment upon an imaginary line, called the Frontier—the point where the edge of Belgium joins that of Prussia—and that the green men with the spiked helmets were the officials of this latter odious country, violently forcing passengers to halt, to stand and deliver passports. In about another half-hour we should roll into the city of the wells—Aachen, or Aix-la-Chapelle—where it had been already arranged that we were to dine together at the sign of The Great King.

Our own door was presently flung open, and the odious fireman's helmet was discovered about the level of the floor, lifting itself slowly. A voice, issuing from under the hairy eaves of sandy moustaches, said, "Vos basseborts, mes-sieurs!" and waited, obstructing light and air, while Miss Brunette opened with a click a little morocco leather travelling warehouse, artfully disposed in chambers and compartments and pigeon-holes and pockets and general snug ac-

commodation, and took out a neatly-bound pocket-book. The apiked fireman gruffly unfolded the rustling sheet, and joined it to his general heap: clutched my document, too, and disappeared.

"Yes," said Mr. Blandman, in his soft manner, "you must come to us in the country. Plenty of good shooting and hunting. We shall amuse you some way. Let me see—to-day is the twenty-sixth—could you come—"

Again a spiked fireman; but a spiked fireman ultor; an avenger—a chastising fireman—with mischief in his dull eye. He pointed to me with his finger; he held my passport in his hand.

"Vo' bassebort," he said, tapping the document; "bas en règle. Vaut dézendre."

"What do you mean?" I said, impatiently; "it is perfectly in rule. Observe the capon, or bird of your country, duly daubed in the regulation lamp-black by the authorised official—the 'Polizei-Director,' I think he is fancifully termed."

"Vaut dézendre," said the odious fireman, rustling his papers menacingly; "you must speak with the Herr Director."

I turned to my companions with a smile and light laugh, which must have sounded hollowly, for I felt a presentiment of evil; I saw a spectral bird, a ghostly raven, perched upon the fireman's helmet.

"I shall set it right in a moment," I said; "it is only some of the red tape of these precious officials!"

But as I looked, it seemed to me that a sort of constraint had come over their faces: they did not appear to see it in the playful light in which I put it.

"A most awkward circumstance," said Mr. Blandman, dryly.

"Very unpleasant, indeed," said Miss Blonde, doubtfully.

Miss Brunette said nothing, but was busy searching a chamber in the little travelling warehouse.

"Thank Heaven!" I said, desperately, appealing to that habeas corpus corner which is in the breast of every Englishman—"thank Heaven, in our free country we have none of this tyranny, this degrading inquisitorial—"

Mr. Blandman coughed.

"It may be very necessary," he said.

"Vaut dézendre!" the infuriated fireman struck in from the door.

With a presentiment that all was over—the banquet at the Grand Monarch, the Christmas festivity, the theatricals, the huntings, the shootings, down at that old ancestral residence—was it called Blandman Manor?—I bowed my head meekly, and followed the green official up to the hut or sentry-box, where a large miller in a white linen coat and spectacles was busy spreading his lamp-blacks and bisected capons over whole sheaves of rustling papers.

"This is the Herr Director," says the green fireman.

Herr Director glared at me a moment, then pounced on an open broad sheet which had been



laid apart on a shelf, and throwing back his miller's coat, became judicial. The traveller was, as it were, upon his trial, standing in the dock.

"Vot' passeport?" says the miller inquisitor.

I said, "Yes."

"Etes s'jet 'tannique?"

There was no use denying that I was a British subject, for he had gleaned the fact from the document before him. I said I *was* s'jet 'tannique. At this moment I heard the loud bassoon, that is to say, the winding horns of the little guards. I made a distracted plunge backward, but was stayed by the fireman and his helmet obstructing the doorway.

"And this is your passeport?" continued the miller policeman.

As was before stated, it was idle to think of repudiating the document.

"Well, then," said the inquisitor, gathering himself up to pass sentence, "you being 'jet 'tannique, and this being your passeport—"

"Montez, montez, messieurs!" from outside, from the little green men.

"Monsieur, I implore you, let me go; the train is about to depart."

"Your passeport," continued procurator fiscal, giving judgment from his hutch, "is not in rule. You must return by the next convey to Brussels, and procure another."

The spiked fireman, tapping me on the shoulder, withdrew me from the hutch. There was a cheerful "tra-la" from unresponsive horns, and the train began to move. I rushed forward desperately; for I had seen the faces of Miss Blonde and Miss Brunette gliding by, and they saw me, in the depths of my humiliation, tapped on the arm by spiked fireman, and detained ingloriously as his prisoner.

I was frantic. I threatened the Herr Director with our minister, and the Times, alluding to the well-known journal. He became polite, strange to say; showed me that mine was a French consular passport, not a British one; that another could be easily procured at Brussels (I laughed scornfully), and that all would yet go well.

I had to pace that often-anathematised apology for a platform under strict fireman surveillance for nearly three hours. Then a return train came up—a slow one—and it was near midnight before I was set down again in Brussels: a miserable broken spirit, panting for vengeance.

I waited on "our minister" betimes, about as early as was *inconvenient*, and told him the simple story of my wrongs. I found him a cold, dry, baked, juiceless man. I obtained the usual redress, and the customary show of sympathy. If the passport was not "in rule," why, it ought to have been. He regretted much it was out of his power, &c. If I wished, he could embody the substance of my case in a statement for the information of the home government, who, he was sure, &c. I quitted this functionary in disgust; and, by an early train was again flying into Prussia. Towards evening the train was once more stopped by green brigands crawling up the sides, and again rifled of its papers. By dusk,

guttural tongues were shouting, "Aachen! Aachen!" and I was presently scouring the streets in the peculiar vehicle of the place, making for the Grand Monarch. I should find them at tea—come upon them with surprise. Miss Brunette would give a sort of suppressed little cry of delight, and Mr. Blandman, putting forth his hand, would wring me cordially, and give me a British welcome. I should like them to be a little dull at the moment; a little tired, anxious for change, when I suddenly appear at the door.

They were gone—gone since this morning; the Grand Monarch would not tell me whither—somewhere out upon the wide world, with the name of their dwelling-place unspoken. I became a prey to black despair, and remained there five weeks, drinking the waters. I bought a Bohemian glass goblet, and quaffed sulphurous draughts, to the confusion of all Prussians. I went to the weekly balls of the place, and scoffed openly at the two officials—sole garrison of the place—who danced and glissaded like dancing-masters, doing all the steps, and who wore the ridiculous old exploded British undress uniform of thirty years back, scales and all. There was another creature in scales, too, obtrusive in his attentions to fashionable English ladies, but who proved on inquiry to be an arch-policeman with an eye-glass, whom you could see any morning up in his squalid office, where droves of submissive rustics who wished to travel a few miles, sat, and petitioned for license, and were bullied according to form. Yet I was glad I tarried in the city of sulphur, for I saw yet another of their little tyrannies. As I sat one morning, partaking of breakfast, and spelling the dreary print, yet amusing from its dreariness, entitled the *Cölnische Zeitung*—there drew near to me once more the green man of the spiked helm. He boded me no good I was sure. He had no business with me, he said, gruffly, "but with *that*."

"With what?"

"That there—the *Zeitung*!"

"Pardon, I have not done with it."

In the name of the king! he demanded the *Zeitung*. He had come to seize that journal. He took with him the wretched print, and was going round the town to seize every other copy. There had been a harmless article on some election then pending, which was displeasing to the government.

#### THE WATCHER.

THE streets are smothered in the snow,  
The chill-eyed stars are cleaving keen  
The frozen air, and, sailing slow,  
The white moon stares across the scene.

She waits beside the fading fire,  
The gasping taper flickers low,  
And drooping down, and rising higher,  
Her shadow wavers to and fro.

No foot disturbs the sleeping floor,  
No motion save the wintry breath  
That, stealing through the crannied door,  
Creeps coldly as a thought of death.



It chills her with its airy stream,  
O cold, O careless midnight blast!  
It wakes her as her fevered dream  
Hath skimmed the sweetness of the past.

She stirs not yet. The night has drawn  
Its silent stream of stars away,  
And now the infant streaks of dawn  
Begin to prophesy the day.

She stirs not yet. Within her eye  
The half-crushed tear-drop lingers still;  
She stirs not, and the smothered sigh  
Breaks wave-like on the rock of will.

O heart that will unheeding prove,  
O heart that must unheeded break,  
How strong the hope, how deep the love,  
That burn for faithless folly's sake!

### THE GREY WOMAN.

#### IN THREE PORTIONS. PORTION THE SECOND.

A NORMAN woman, Amante by name, was sent to Les Rochers by the Paris milliner, to become my maid. She was tall and handsome, though upwards of forty, and somewhat gaunt. But, on first seeing her, I liked her; she was neither rude nor familiar in her manners, and had a pleasant look of straightforwardness about her that I had missed in all the inhabitants of the château, and had foolishly set down in my own mind as a national want. Amante was directed by M. de la Tourelle to sit in my boudoir, and to be always within call. He also gave her many instructions as to her duties in matters which, perhaps, strictly belonged to my department of management. But I was young and inexperienced, and thankful to be spared any responsibility.

I dare say it was true what M. de la Tourelle said—before many weeks had elapsed—that, for a great lady, a lady of a castle, I became sadly too familiar with my Norman waiting-maid. But you know that by birth we were not very far apart in rank: Amante was the daughter of a Norman farmer, I of a German miller; and, besides, that my life was so lonely! It almost seemed as if I could not please my husband. He had written for some one capable of being my companion at times, and now he was jealous of my free regard for her—angry because I could sometimes laugh at her original tunes and amusing proverbs, while when with him I was too much frightened to smile.

From time to time families from a distance of some leagues drove through the bad roads in their heavy carriages to pay us a visit, and there was an occasional talk of our going to Paris when public affairs should be a little more settled. These little events and plans were the only variations in my life for the first twelve months, if I except the alternations in M. de la Tourelle's temper, his unreasonable anger, and his passionate fondness.

Perhaps one of the reasons that made me take pleasure and comfort in Amante's society was, that whereas I was afraid of everybody (I do not think I was half as much afraid of

things as of persons), Amante feared no one. She would quietly beard Lefebvre, and he respected her all the more for it; she had a knack of putting questions to M. de la Tourelle, which respectfully informed him that she had detected the weak point, but forbore to press him too closely upon it out of deference to his position as her master. And with all her shrewdness to others, she had quite tender ways with me; all the more so at this time because she knew, what I had not yet ventured to tell M. de la Tourelle, that by-and-by I might become a mother, that wonderful object of mysterious interest to single women, who no longer hope to enjoy such blessedness themselves.

It was once more autumn; late in October. But I was reconciled to my habitation; the walls of the new part of the building no longer looked bare and desolate; the débris had been so far cleared away by M. de la Tourelle's desire as to make me a little flower-garden, in which I tried to cultivate those plants that I remembered as growing at home. Amante and I had moved the furniture in the rooms, and adjusted it to our liking; my husband had ordered many an article from time to time that he thought would give me pleasure, and I was becoming tame to my apparent imprisonment in a certain part of the great building, the whole of which I had never yet explored. It was October, as I say, once more. The days were lovely, though short in duration, and M. de la Tourelle had occasion, so he said, to go to that distant estate the superintendence of which so frequently took him away from home. He took Lefebvre with him, and possibly some more of the lacqueys; he often did. And my spirits rose a little at the thought of his absence; and then the new sensation that he was the father of my unborn babe came over me, and I tried to invest him with this fresh character. I tried to believe that it was his passionate love for me that made him so jealous and tyrannical, imposing, as he did, restrictions on my very intercourse with my dear father, from whom I was so entirely separated, as far as personal intercourse was concerned.

I had, it is true, let myself go into a sorrowful review of all the troubles which lay hidden beneath the seeming luxury of my life. I knew that no one cared for me except my husband and Amante; for it was clear enough to see that I, as his wife, and also as a parvenue, was not popular among the few neighbours who surrounded us; and as for the servants, the women were all hard and impudent-looking, treating me with a semblance of respect that had more of mockery than reality in it, while the men had a lurking kind of fierceness about them, sometimes displayed even to M. de la Tourelle, who on his part, it must be confessed, was often severe even to cruelty in his management of them. My husband loved me, I said to myself, but I said it almost in the form of a question. His love was shown fitfully, and more in ways calculated to please himself than to please me. I felt that for no wish of mine would he deviate

one tittle from any predetermined course of action. I had learnt the inflexibility of those thin, delicate lips; I knew how anger would turn his fair complexion to deadly white, and bring the cruel light into his pale blue eyes. The love I bore to any one seemed to be a reason for his hating them, and so I went on pitying myself one long dreary afternoon during that absence of his of which I have spoken, only sometimes remembering to check myself in my murmurings by thinking of the new unseen link between us, and then crying afresh to think how wicked I was. Oh, how well I remember that long October evening! Amante came in from time to time, talking away to cheer me—talking about dress and Paris, and I hardly know what, but from time to time looking at me keenly with her friendly dark eyes, and with serious interest, too, though all her words were about frivolity. At length she heaped the fire with wood, drew the heavy silken curtains close; for I had been anxious hitherto to keep them open so that I might see the pale moon mounting the skies, as I used to see her—the same moon—rise from behind the Kaiser Stuhl at Heidelberg; but the sight made me cry, so Amante shut it out. She dictated to me as a nurse does to a child.

"Now, madame must have the little kitten to keep her company," she said, "while I go and ask Marthon for a cup of coffee." I remember that speech, and the way it roused me, for I did not like Amante to think I wanted amusing by a kitten. It might be my petulance, but this speech—such as she might have made to a child—annoyed me, and I said that I had reason for my lowness of spirits—meaning that they were not of so imaginary a nature that I could be diverted from them by the gambols of a kitten. So, though I did not choose to tell her all, I told her a part; and as I spoke, I began to suspect that the good creature knew much of what I withheld, and that the little speech about the kitten was more thoughtfully kind than it had seemed at first. I said that it was so long since I had heard from my father; that he was an old man, and so many things might happen—I might never see him again—and I so seldom heard from him or my brother; it was a more complete and total separation than I had ever anticipated when I married, and something of my home and of my life previous to my marriage I told the good Amante; for I had not been brought up as a great lady, and the sympathy of any human being was precious to me.

Amante listened with interest, and in return told me some of the events and sorrows of her own life. Then, remembering her purpose, she set out in search of the coffee, which ought to have been brought to me an hour before; but in my husband's absence my wishes were but seldom attended to, and I never dared to give orders.

Presently she returned, bringing the coffee and a great large cake.

"See!" said she, setting it down. "Look

at my plunder. Madame must eat. Those who eat always laugh. And, besides, I have a little news that will please madame." Then she told me that, lying on a table in the great kitchen, was a bundle of letters, come by the courier from Strasburg that very afternoon; then, fresh from her conversation with me, she had hastily untied the string that bound them, but had only just traced out one that she thought was from Germany, when a servant-man came in, and with the start he gave her she dropped the letters, which he picked up, swearing at her for having untied and disarranged them. She told him that she believed there was a letter there for her mistress; but he only swore the more, saying that if there was it was no business of hers, or of his either, for that he had the strictest orders always to take all letters that arrived during his master's absence into the private sitting-room of the latter—a room into which I had never entered, although it opened out of my husband's dressing-room.

I asked Amante if she had not conquered and brought me this letter. No, indeed, she replied, it was almost as much as her life was worth to live among such a set of servants; it was only a month ago that Jacques had stabbed Valentin for some jesting talk. Had I never missed Valentin—that handsome young lad who carried up the wood into my salon? Poor fellow! he lies dead and cold now, and they said in the village he had put an end to himself, but those of the household knew better. Oh! I need not be afraid; Jacques was gone, no one knew where; but with such people it was not safe to upbraid or insist. Monsieur would be at home the next day, and it would not be long to wait.

But I felt as if I could not exist till the next day without the letter. It might be to say that my father was ill, dying—he might cry for his daughter from his death-bed! In short, there was no end to the thoughts and fancies that haunted me. It was of no use for Amante to say that after all she might be mistaken—that she did not read writing well—that she had but a glimpse of the address; I let my coffee cool, my food all became distasteful, and I wrung my hands with impatience to get at the letter, and have some news of my dear ones at home. All the time, Amante kept her imperturbable good temper, first reasoning, then scolding. At last she said, as if wearied out, that if I would consent to make a good supper, she would see what could be done as to our going to Monsieur's room in search of the letter, after the servants were all gone to bed. We agreed to go together when all was still, and look over the letters; there could be no harm in that; and yet, somehow, we were such cowards we dared not do it openly and in the face of the household.

Presently my supper came up—partridges, bread, fruits, and cream. How well I remember that supper! We put the untouched cake away in a sort of buffet, and poured the cold coffee out of the window, in order that the ser-

wants might not take offence at the apparent fancifulness of sending down for food I could not eat. I was so anxious for all to be in bed, that I told the footman who served that he need not wait to take away the plates and dishes, but might go to bed. Long after I thought the house was quiet, Amante, in her caution, made me wait. It was past eleven before we set out, with cat-like steps and veiled light, along the passages, to go to my husband's room and steal my own letter, if it was indeed there; a fact about which Amante had become very uncertain in the progress of our discussion.

To make you understand my story, I must now try to explain to you the plan of the château. It had been at one time a fortified place of some strength, perched on the summit of a rock, which projected from the side of the mountain. But additions had been made to the old building (which must have borne a strong resemblance to the castles overhanging the Rhine), and these new buildings were placed so as to command a magnificent view, being on the steepest side of the rock, from which the mountain fell away, as it were, leaving the great plain of France in full survey. The ground-plan was something of the shape of three sides of an oblong; my apartments in the modern edifice occupied the narrow end, and had this grand prospect. The front of the castle was old, and ran parallel to the road far below. In this were contained the offices and public rooms of various descriptions, into which I never penetrated. The back wing (considering the new building, in which my apartments were, as the centre) consisted of many rooms, of a dark and gloomy character, as the mountain-side shut out much of the sun, and heavy pine woods came down within a few yards of the windows. Yet on this side—on a projecting plateau of the rock—my husband had formed the flower-garden of which I have spoken; for he was a great cultivator of flowers in his leisure moments.

Now my bedroom was the corner room of the new buildings on the part next to the mountain. Hence I could have let myself down into the flower-garden by my hands on the window-sill on one side, without danger of hurting myself; while the windows at right angles with these looked sheer down a descent of a hundred feet at least. Going still farther along this wing, you came to the old building; in fact, these two fragments of the ancient castle had formerly been attached by some such connecting apartments as my husband had rebuilt. These rooms belonged to M. de la Tourelle. His bedroom opened into mine, his dressing-room lay beyond; and that was pretty nearly all I knew, for the servants, as well as he himself, had a knack of turning me back, under some pretence, if ever they found me walking about alone, as I was inclined to do, when first I came, from a sort of curiosity, to see the whole of the place of which I found myself mistress. M. de la Tourelle never encouraged me to go out alone, either in a carriage or for a walk, saying always

that the roads were unsafe in those disturbed times; indeed, I have sometimes fancied since that the flower-garden, to which the only access from the castle was through his rooms, was designed in order to give me exercise and employment under his own eye.

But to return to that night. I knew, as I have said, that M. de la Tourelle's private room opened out of his dressing-room, and this out of his bedroom, which again opened into mine, the corner-room. But there were other doors into all these rooms, and these doors led into a long gallery, lighted by windows, looking into the inner court. I do not remember our consulting much about it; we went through my room into my husband's apartment through the dressing-room, but the door of communication into his study was locked, so there was nothing for it but to turn back and go by the gallery to the other door. I recollect noticing one or two things in these rooms, then seen by me for the first time. I remember the sweet perfume that hung in the air, the scent bottles of silver that decked his toilet-table, and the whole apparatus for bathing and dressing, more luxurious even than those which he had provided for me. But the room itself was less splendid in its proportions than mine. In truth, the new buildings ended at the entrance to my husband's dressing-room. There were deep window recesses in walls eight or nine feet thick, and even the partitions between the chambers were three feet deep; but over all these doors or windows there fell thick, heavy draperies, so that I should think no one could have heard in one room what passed in another. We went back into my room, and out into the gallery. We had to shade our candle, from a fear that possessed us, I don't know why, lest some of the servants in the opposite wing might trace our progress towards the part of the castle unused by any one except my husband. Somehow, I had always the feeling that all the domestics, except Amante, were spies upon me, and that I was trammelled in a web of observation and unspoken limitation extending over all my actions.

There was a light in the upper room; we paused, and Amante would have again retreated, but I was chafing under the delays. What was the harm of my seeking my father's unopened letter to me in my husband's study? I, generally the coward, now blamed Amante for her unusual timidity. But the truth was, she had far more reason for suspicion as to the proceedings of that terrible household than I had ever known of. I urged her on, I pressed on myself; we came to the door, locked, but with the key in it; we turned it, we entered; the letters lay on the table, their white oblongs catching the light in an instant, and revealing themselves to my eager eyes, hungering after the words of love from my peaceful distant home. But just as I pressed forward to examine the letters, the candle which Amante held, caught in some draught, went out, and we were in darkness. Amante proposed that we should carry the letters back to my salon, collecting them as



well as we could in the dark, and returning all but the expected one for me; but I begged her to return to my room, where I kept tinder and flint, and to strike a fresh light; and so she went, and I remained alone in the room, of which I could only just distinguish the size, and the principal articles of furniture: a large table, with a deep overhanging cloth, in the middle, *escritoires* and other heavy articles against the walls; all this I could see as I stood there, my hand on the table close by the letters, my face towards the window, which, both from the darkness of the wood growing high up the mountain-side and the faint light of the declining moon, seemed only like an oblong of paler purpler black than the shadowy room. How much I remembered from my one instantaneous glance before the candle went out, how much I saw as my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I do not know, but even now, in my dreams, comes up that room of horror, distinct in its profound shadow. Amante could hardly have been gone a minute before I felt an additional gloom before the window, and heard soft movements outside—soft, but resolute, and continued until the end was accomplished, and the window raised.

In mortal terror of people forcing an entrance at such an hour, and in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their purpose, I would have turned to fly when first I heard the noise, only that I feared by any quick motion to catch their attention, as I also ran the danger of doing by opening the door, which was all but closed, and to whose handlings I was unaccustomed. Again, quick as lightning, I bethought me of the hiding-place between the locked door to my husband's dressing-room and the portière which covered it; but I gave that up, I felt as if I could not reach it without screaming or fainting. So I sank down softly, and crept under the table, hidden, as I hoped, by the great deep table-cover, with its heavy fringe. I had not recovered my swooning senses fully, and was trying to reassure myself as to my being in a place of comparative safety, for, above all things, I dreaded the betrayal of fainting, and struggled hard for such courage as I might attain by deadening myself to the danger I was in by inflicting intense pain on myself. You have often asked me the reason of that mark on my hand; it was where, in my agony, I bit out a piece of flesh with my relentless teeth, thankful for the pain, which helped to numb my terror. I say, I was but just concealed when I heard the window lifted, and one after another stepped over the sill, and stood by me so close that I could have touched their feet. Then they laughed and whispered; my brain swam so that I could not tell the meaning of their words, but I heard my husband's laughter among the rest—low, hissing, and scornful—as he kicked something heavy that they had dragged in over the floor, and which lay near me; so near, that my husband's kick, in touching it, touched me too. I don't know why—I can't tell how—but some feeling, and not

curiosity, prompted me to put out my hand, ever so softly, ever so little, and feel in the darkness for what lay spurned beside me. I stole my groping palm upon the clenched and chilly hand of a corpse!

Strange to say, this roused me to instant vividness of thought. Till this moment I had almost forgotten Amante; now I planned with feverish rapidity how I could give her a warning not to return; or rather, I should say, I tried to plan, for all my projects were utterly futile, as I might have seen from the first. I could only hope she would hear the voices of those who were now busy in trying to kindle a light, swearing awful oaths at the mislaid articles which would have enabled them to strike fire. I heard her step outside coming nearer and nearer; I saw from my hiding-place the line of light beneath the door more and more distinctly; close to it her footstep paused; the men inside—at the time I thought they had been only two, but I found out afterwards there were three—paused in their endeavours, and were quite still, as breathless as myself, I suppose. Then she slowly pushed the door open with gentle motion, to save her flickering candle from being again extinguished. For a moment all was still. Then I heard my husband say, as he advanced towards her (he wore riding-boots, the shape of which I knew well, as I could see them in the light),

"Amante, may I ask what brings you here into my private room?"

He stood between her and the dead body of a man, from which ghastly heap I shrank away as it almost touched me, so close were we all together. I could not tell whether she saw it or not; I could give her no warning, nor make any dumb utterance of signs to bid her what to say—if, indeed, I knew myself what would be best for her to say.

Her voice was quite changed when she spoke; quite hoarse, and very low; yet it was steady enough as she said, what was the truth, that she had come to look for a letter which she believed had arrived for me from Germany. Good, brave Amante! Not a word about me. M. de la Tourelle answered with a grim blasphemy and a fearful threat. He would have no one prying into his premises; madame should have her letters, if there were any, when he chose to give them to her, if, indeed, he thought it well to give them to her at all. As for Amante, this was her first warning, but it was also her last; and, taking the candle out of her hand, he turned her out of the room, his companions discreetly making a screen, so as to throw the corpse into deep shadow. I heard the key turn in the door after her—if I had ever had any thought of escape it was gone now. I only hoped that whatever was to befall me might soon be over, for the tension of nerve was growing more than I could bear. The instant she could be supposed to be out of hearing, two voices began speaking in the most angry terms to my husband, upbraiding him for not having detained her, gagged her—nay, one was for killing her, saying he had seen her eye fall on the



face of the dead man, whom he now kicked in his passion. Though the form of their speech was as if they were speaking to equals, yet in their tone there was something of fear. I am sure my husband was their superior, or captain, or somewhat. He replied to them almost as if he were scoffing at them, saying it was such an expenditure of labour having to do with fools; that, ten to one, the woman was only telling the simple truth, and that she was frightened enough by discovering her master in his room to be thankful to escape and return to her mistress, to whom he could easily explain on the morrow how he happened to return in the dead of night. But his companions fell to cursing me, and saying that since M. de la Tourelle had been married he was fit for nothing but to dress himself fine and scent himself with perfume; that, as for me, they could have got him twenty girls prettier, and with far more spirit in them. He quietly answered that I suited him, and that was enough. All this time they were doing something—I could not see what—to the corpse; sometimes they were too busy rifling the dead body, I believe, to talk; again they let it fall with a heavy, resistless thud, and took to quarrelling. They taunted my husband with angry vehemence, enraged at his scoffing and scornful replies, his mocking laughter. Yes, holding up his poor dead victim, the better to strip him of whatever he wore that was valuable, I heard my husband laugh just as he had done when exchanging repartees in the little salon of the Rupprechts at Carlsruhe. I hated and dreaded him from that moment. At length, as if to make an end of the subject, he said, with cool determination in his voice,

"Now, my good friends, what is the use of all this talking, when you know in your hearts that, if I suspected my wife of knowing more than I chose of my affairs, she would not outlive the day? Remember Victorine. Because she merely joked about my affairs in an imprudent manner, and rejected my advice to keep a prudent tongue—to see what she liked, but ask nothing and say nothing—she has gone a long journey—longer than to Paris."

"But this one is different to her; we knew all that Madame Victorine knew, she was such a chatterbox; but this one may find out a vast deal, and never breathe a word about it, she is so sly. Some fine day we may have the country raised, and the gendarmes down upon us from Strasburg, and all owing to your pretty doll, with her cunning ways of coming over you."

I think this roused M. de la Tourelle a little from his contemptuous indifference, for he ground an oath through his teeth, and said, "Feel! this dagger is sharp, Henri. If my wife breathes a word, and I am such a fool as not to have stopped her mouth effectually before she can bring down gendarmes upon us, just let that good steel find its way to my heart. Let her guess but one tittle, let her have but one slight suspicion that I am not a 'grand propriétaire,' much less imagine that I am a chief of chauffeurs,

and she follows Victorine on the long journey beyond Paris that very day."

"She'll outwit you yet; or I never judged women well. Those still silent ones are the devil. She'll be off during some of your absences, having picked out some secret that will break us all on the wheel."

"Bah!" said his voice; and then in a minute he added, "Let her go if she will. But, where she goes, I will follow; so don't cry before you're hurt."

By this time, they had nearly stripped the body; and the conversation turned on what they should do with it. I learnt that the dead man was the Sieur de Poissy, a neighbouring gentleman, whom I had often heard of as hunting with my husband. I had never seen him, but he spoke as if he had come upon them while they were robbing some Cologne merchant, torturing him after the cruel practice of the chauffeurs, by roasting the feet of their victims in order to compel them to reveal any hidden circumstances connected with their wealth, of which the chauffeurs afterwards made use; and this Sieur de Poissy coming down upon them, and recognising M. de la Tourelle, they had killed him, and brought him hither after nightfall. I heard him, whom I called my husband, laugh his little light laugh as he spoke of the way in which the dead body had been strapped before one of the riders, in such a way that it appeared to any passer-by as if, in truth, the murderer were tenderly supporting some sick person. He repeated some mocking reply of double meaning, which he himself had given to some one who made inquiry. He enjoyed the play upon words, softly applauding his own wit. And all the time the poor helpless outstretched arms of the dead lay close to his dainty boot! Then another stooped (my heart stopped beating), and picked up a letter lying on the ground—a letter that had dropped out of M. de Poissy's pocket—a letter from his wife, full of tender words of endearment and pretty babblings of love. This was read aloud, with coarse ribald comments on every sentence, each trying to outdo the previous speaker. When they came to some pretty words about a sweet Maurice, their little child away with its mother on some visit, they laughed at M. de la Tourelle, and told him that he would be hearing such woman's drivelling some day. Up to that moment, I think, I had only feared him, but his unnatural, half-ferocious reply made me hate even more than I dreaded him. But now they grew weary of their savage merriment; the jewels and watch had been appraised, the money and papers examined; and apparently there was some necessity for the body being interred quietly and before daybreak. They had not dared to leave him where he was slain for fear lest people should come and recognise him, and raise the hue and cry upon them. For they all along spoke as if it was their constant endeavour to keep the immediate neighbourhood of Les Rochers in the most orderly and tranquil condition, so as never to give cause for visits from the gendarmes. They disputed a little as

to whether they should make their way into the castle larder through the gallery, and satisfy their hunger before the hasty interment, or afterwards. I listened with eager feverish interest as soon as this meaning of their speeches reached my hot and troubled brain, for at the time the words they uttered seemed only to stamp themselves with terrible force on my memory, so that I could hardly keep from repeating them aloud like a dull, miserable, unconscious echo; but my brain was numb to the sense of what they said, unless I myself were named, and then, I suppose, some instinct of self-preservation stirred within me, and quickened my sense. And how I strained my ears, and nerved my hands and limbs, beginning to twitch with convulsive movements, which I feared might betray me! I gathered every word they spoke, not knowing which proposal to wish for, but feeling that whatever was finally decided upon, my only chance of escape was drawing near. I once feared lest my husband should go to his bedroom before I had had that one chance, in which case he would most likely have perceived my absence. He said that his hands were soiled (I shuddered, for it might be with life-blood), and he would go and cleanse them; but some bitter jest turned his purpose, and he left the room with the other two—left it by the gallery door. Left me alone in the dark with the stiffening corpse!

Now, now was my time, if ever; and yet I could not move. It was not my cramped and stiffened joints that crippled me, it was the sensation of that dead man's close presence. I almost fancied—I almost fancy still—I heard the arm nearest to me move; lift itself up, as if once more imploring, and fall in dead despair. At that fancy—if fancy it were—I screamed aloud in mad terror, and the sound of my own strange voice broke the spell. I drew myself to the side of the table farthest from the corpse, with as much slow caution as if I really could have feared the clutch of that poor dead arm, powerless for evermore. I softly raised myself up, and stood sick and trembling holding by the table, too dizzy to know what to do next. I nearly fainted, when a low voice spoke—when Amante, from the outside of the door, whispered, "Madame!" The faithful creature had been on the watch, had heard my scream, and having seen the three ruffians troop along the gallery down the stairs, and across the court to the offices in the other wing of the castle, she had stolen to the door of the room in which I was. The sound of her voice gave me strength; I walked straight towards it, as one benighted on a dreary moor, suddenly perceiving the small steady light which tells of human dwellings, takes heart, and steers straight onward. Where I was, where that voice was, I knew not; but go to it I must, or die. The door once opened—I know not by which of us—I fell upon her neck, grasping her tight, till my hands ached with the tension of their hold. Yet she never uttered a word. Only she took me up in her vigorous arms and bore me to my room, and laid me on

my bed. I do not know more; as soon as I was placed there I lost sense; I came to myself with a horrible dread lest my husband was by me, with a belief that he was in the room, in hiding, waiting to hear my first words, watching for the least sign of the terrible knowledge I possessed to murder me. I dared not breathe quicker, I measured and timed each heavy inspiration; I did not speak, nor move, nor even open my eyes, for long after I was in my full, my miserable senses. I heard some one treading softly about the room, as if with a purpose, not as if for curiosity, or merely to beguile the time; some one passed in and out of the salon; and I still lay quiet, feeling as if death were inevitable, but wishing that the agony of death were past. Again faintness stole over me, but just as I was sinking into the horrible feeling of nothingness I heard Amante's voice close to me, saying,

"Drink this, madame, and let us begone. All is ready."

I let her put her arm under my head and raise me, and pour something down my throat. All the time she kept talking in a quiet measured voice, unlike her own, so dry and authoritative; she told me that a suit of her clothes lay ready for me, that she herself was as much disguised as the circumstances permitted her to be, that what provisions I had left from my supper were stowed away in her pockets, and so she went on, dwelling on little details of the most common-place description, but never alluding for an instant to the fearful cause why flight was necessary. I made no inquiry as to how she knew, or what she knew. I never asked her either then or afterwards, I could not bear it—we kept our dreadful secret close. But I suppose she must have been in the dressing-room adjoining, and heard all.

In fact, I dared not speak even to her, as if there were anything beyond the most common event in life in our preparing thus to leave the house of blood by stealth in the dead of night. She gave me directions—short condensed directions, without reasons—just as you do to a child; and like a child I obeyed her. She went often to the door and listened; and often, too, she went to the window, and looked anxiously out. For me, I saw nothing but her, and I dared not let my eyes wander from her for a minute; and I heard nothing in the deep midnight silence but her soft movements, and the heavy beating of my own heart. At last she took my hand, and led me in the dark, through the salon, once more into the terrible gallery, where across the black darkness the windows admitted pale sheeted ghosts of light upon the floor. Clinging to her I went; unquestioning—for she was human sympathy to me after the isolation of my unspeakable terror. On we went, turning to the left instead of to the right, past my suite of sitting-rooms where the gilding was red with blood, into that unknown wing of the castle that fronted the main road lying parallel far below. She guided me along the basement passages to which we had now descended, until

we came to a little open door, through which the air blew chill and cold, bringing for the first time a sensation of life to me. The door led into a kind of cellar, through which we groped our way to an opening like a window, but which, instead of being glazed, was only fenced with iron bars, two of which were loose, as Amante evidently knew, for she took them out with the ease of one who had performed the action often before, and then helped me to follow her out into the free open air.

We stole round the end of the building, and on turning the corner—she first—I felt her hold of me tighten for an instant, and the next step I too heard distant voices, and the blows of a spade upon the heavy soil, for the night was very warm and still.

We had not spoken a word; we did not speak now. Touch was safer and as expressive. She turned down towards the high road; I followed. I did not know the path; we stumbled again and again, and I was much bruised; so doubtless was she; but bodily pain did me good. At last we were on the plainer path of the high road.

I had such faith in her that I did not venture to speak, even when she paused, as wondering to which hand she should turn. But now, for the first time, she spoke:

"Which way did you come when he brought you here first?"

I pointed, I could not speak.

We turned in the opposite direction; still going along the high road. In about an hour, we struck up to the mountain-side, scrambling far up before we even dared to rest; far up and away again before day had fully dawned. Then we looked about for some place of rest and concealment: and now we dared to speak in whispers. Amante told me that she had locked the door of communication between his bedroom and mine, and, as in a dream, I was aware that she had also looked and brought away the key of the door between the latter and the salon.

"He will have been too busy this night to think much about you—he will suppose you are asleep—I shall be the first to be missed—but they will only just now be discovering our loss."

I remember those last words of hers made me pray to go on—I felt as if we were losing precious time in thinking either of rest or concealment; but she hardly replied to me, so busy was she in seeking out some hiding-place. At length, giving it up in despair, we proceeded onwards a little way; the mountain-side sloped downwards rapidly, and in the full morning light we saw ourselves in a narrow valley, made by a stream which forced its way along it. About a mile lower down there rose the pale blue smoke of a village, a mill-wheel was lashing up the water close at hand, though out of sight. Keeping under the cover of every sheltering tree or bush, we worked our way down past the mill, down to a one-arched bridge, which doubtless formed part of the road between the village and the mill.

"This will do," said she; and we crept under the space, and climbing a little way up the rough stone-work, we seated ourselves on a projecting ledge, and crouched in the deep damp shadow. Amante sat a little above me, and made me lay my head on her lap. Then she fed me and took some food herself; and opening out her great dark cloak, she covered up every light-coloured speck about us; and thus we sat, shivering and shuddering, yet feeling a kind of rest through it all, simply from the fact that motion was no longer imperative, and that during the daylight our only chance of safety was to be still. But the damp shadow in which we were sitting was blighting, from the circumstance of the sunlight never penetrating there; and I dreaded lest, before night and the time for exertion again came on, I should feel illness creeping all over me. To add to our discomfort it had rained the whole day long, and the stream, fed by a thousand little mountain brooklets, began to swell into a torrent, rushing over the stones with a perpetual and dizzying noise.

Every now and then I was wakened from the painful doze into which I continually fell, by a sound of horses' feet over our head: sometimes lumbering heavily as if dragging a burden, sometimes rattling and galloping, and with the sharper cry of men's voices coming cutting through the roar of the waters. At length day fell. We had to drop into the stream, which came above our knees as we waded to the bank. There we stood, stiff and shivering. Even Amante's courage seemed to fail.

"We must pass this night in shelter, somehow," said she. For indeed the rain was coming down pitilessly. I said nothing. I thought that surely the end must be death in some shape; and I only hoped that to death might not be added the terror of the cruelty of men. In a minute or so she had resolved on her course of action. We went up the stream to the mill. The familiar sounds, the scent of the wheat, the flour whitening the walls—all reminded me of home, and it seemed to me as if I must struggle out of this nightmare and waken, and find myself once more a happy girl by the Neckar side. They were long in unbarring the door at which Amante had knocked; at length an old feeble voice inquired who was there, and what was sought? Amante answered shelter from the storm for two women; but the old woman replied, with suspicious hesitation, that she was sure it was a man who was asking for shelter, and that she could not let us in. But at length she satisfied herself, and unbarred the heavy door, and admitted us. She was not an unkindly woman, but her thoughts all travelled in one circle, and that was, that her master, the miller, had told her on no account to let any man into the place during his absence, and that she did not know if he would not think two women as bad; and yet that as we were not men, no one could say she had disobeyed him, for it was a shame to let a dog be out such a night as this. Amante, with ready wit, told her to let no one know that we had taken shelter there that night, and that then her master could



not blame her; and while she was thus enjoining secrecy as the wisest course, with a view to far other people than the miller, she was hastily helping me to take off my wet clothes, and spreading them, as well as the brown mantle that had covered us both, before the great stove which warmed the room with the effectual heat that the old woman's failing vitality required. All this time the poor creature was discussing with herself as to whether she had disobeyed orders, in a kind of garrulous way that made me fear much for her capability of retaining anything secret if she was questioned. By-and-by she wandered away to an unnecessary revelation of her master's whereabouts: gone to help in the search for his landlord, the *Sieur de Poissy*, who lived at the *château* just above, and who had not returned from his chase the day before; so the intendant imagined he might have met with some accident, and had summoned the neighbours to beat the forest and the hill-side. She told us much besides, giving us to understand that she would fain meet with a place as housekeeper where there were more servants and less to do, as her life here was very lonely and dull, especially since her master's son had gone away—gone to the wars. She then took her supper, which was evidently apportioned out to her with a sparing hand, as, even if the idea had come into her head, she had not enough to offer us any. Fortunately warmth was all that we required, and that, thanks to Amante's cares, was returning to our chilled bodies. After supper the old woman grew drowsy, but she seemed uncomfortable at the idea of going to sleep and leaving us still in the house. Indeed, she gave us pretty broad hints as to the propriety of our going once more out into the bleak and stormy night; but we begged to be allowed to stay under shelter of some kind, and at last a bright idea came over her, and she bade us mount by a ladder to a kind of loft, which went half over the lofty mill-kitchen on which we were sitting; we obeyed her—what else could we do?—and found ourselves in a spacious floor, without any safeguard or wall, boarding, or railing, to keep us from falling over into the kitchen in case we went too near the edge. It was, in fact, the store-room or garret for the household. There was bedding piled up, boxes and chests, mill sacks, the winter store of apples and nuts, bundles of old clothes, broken furniture, and many other things. No sooner were we up there than the old woman dragged the ladder by which we had ascended away with a chuckle, as if she was now secure that we could do no mischief, and sat herself down again once more, to doze and await her master's return. We pulled out some bedding, and gladly laid ourselves down in our dried clothes and in some warmth, hoping to have the sleep we so much needed to refresh us and prepare us for the next day. But I could not sleep, and I was aware from her breathing that Amante was equally wakeful. We could both see through the crevices between the boards that formed the flooring into the kitchen below, very partially lighted by the

common lamp that hung against the wall near the stove on the opposite side to that on which we were.

### AMERICAN SLEEPING CARS.

I BATHE in the golden air of an American-Indian summer. The maple-trees glow above my head like huge nosegays lighting the stainless blue air. Autumn has painted their kindling leaves from her most lavish palette. They burn away round me in every possible crescendo shade of crimson, carmine, pink, and puce, from dead black and fiery orange, with here and there among them a sprinkle of pure pale green leaves, as yet unalchemised by that wonderful magician—autumn.

I am a passenger in the "Lightning Express" train, say from Nashville to Memphis, on the Mississippi, that great brown-grandpapa of the American rivers. The line is a good safe line, but not an "air line," as our American brothers call those of their railways that run across level prairies, without curves, bays, gradients, or windings, as in Indiana and Wisconsin, for example.

The cars are not, as in England, so many stage-coaches glued together. They are, it is true, of the same Russian sledge-body model as ours, but they are larger and longer than two of our omnibuses joined, and contain some forty or fifty people each: so, for the student of faces, there is endless amusement, and for the sociable, much opportunity for society.

The Americans being republicans, and acknowledging no social distinctions, charge the same price for all their carriages, and all their carriages are first class. The seats holding two persons each are ranged in rows, down either side of the carriage, with a path for the conductor, ticket collector, and itinerant salesmen, down the middle. These seats all face the same way, except a stray bench or two round the glass-door, which is not at the side as with us, but at either end. The benches are like free seats in a church, with low backs, sometimes of padded velvet, and, on the poorer lines, of fine carpet or leather. The floors are always carpeted or matted, and the windows have generally Venetian blinds, and shutters for the night, or for the severe cold weather. There is always at one end of each carriage a large stone filter with a tin mug attached, for general use in the burning thirsty summers. On most lines, especially in the south, there is a negro or negress—a boy or girl—who comes round every half hour or so and offers a glass of water from a huge cool gurgling jug.

And I must go on, for I cannot describe the sleeping cars till I have first sketched the ordinary day car, and its points of difference from ours. The conductor, who wears no uniform but a cap with a band labelled "conductor"—for the Americans consider uniforms badges of inferiority—works perpetually in and out through the doors at either end that lead from



one carriage to another. This perpetual slamming of the fore-door and the aft-door is a special irritation, particularly when one wants to get to sleep and is actually wrestling with Morpheus for his blessing. He appears spectrally at every station to examine the tickets of the new comers, and to give them in exchange a check with a list of stations and distances on the back, which, in its turn, will be delivered up at the respective termini. This conductor, when not chatting with an acquaintance, or imparting information to inquisitive strangers like myself, is walking from carriage to carriage, watching the breaksman, or maintaining the general police of the line.

The breaksman, sometimes far south, a great laughing robust negro, who grinds at the brake as if he were winding up a giant's watch, stands outside the compartment door, on a small balcony or platform which joins the two carriages. On this platform, on its high or lower steps, men go out to smoke, or meditatively expectorate, as they watch the half-cleared forests through which we tear and scream, scaring the wild turkeys and frightening the great Kentucky mules in the wooden railroad-meadows. Yet this "coign of vantage" is not the smoker's special stand and perch. No, there is always a smoking car to every train, just as there is a ladies' car, where no smoking is allowed.

The smoking car is about as big as a Kensington omnibus, with seats running all round, and a table in the middle, on which the news-boy generally spreads his ephemeral store of intellectual sophistry: his *Superfine Reviews*, his *Daily Avalanches*, and his *Arkansas Tobacco Plants*. This is, indeed, the den of the railroad stationer, from whence he emerges to deliver his "five cent" oracles.

And here a not irrelevant word on the railroad petty traders, of whom the flying stationer is now the acknowledged chief. No want can arise in the traveller's mind that there is not some one in an American railway train ready to administer to. Every town you pass, pelts you with its daily papers. If you stop for ten minutes at a central station, a lean expounding sort of quack missionary, standing erect at the door, informs the whole carriageful that "the dead-shot worm candy" is now selling at twenty-five cents the packet; that "Vestris's bloom," the finest cosmetic in the known world, is to be had for half a dollar the quarter of a pound, and dirt cheap at the money; or that "Knickerbocker's corn exterminator" makes life's path easy, at a dime the ounce packet. Presently, you fall asleep, and awake covered with a heavy snow of handbills about Harper's excellent reprints, and Peterson's vulgar and unscrupulous robberies from English authors. Anon, shouts a huge fellow with enormous apples, two cents each, peaches in their season, hickory nuts, "pecans," or maple sugar cakes. To them succeed sellers of ivory combs, parched corn, packets of mixed sweetmeats. If the weather be cold, and glazings of frost lie chill on the crimsoned maple

leaves in the woods, the breaksman enters and lights the stove that stands in a little circle kept apart about the centre of the carriage.

I do not, of course, touch on the sanitary arrangements of the carriages, which are excellent, or on the refreshment cars, because the latter are but of recent introduction; but I must remark on the truly admirable system by which the conductor, or even the passengers, can, in cases of fire or murderous assault or other necessity, at once communicate with the engine-driver, and instantly stop the train. It consists of a cord, running in loops along the roof of every carriage, separating, where separation is necessary, by hooks and swivels, and attached at one end to a bell or dial on the engine.

Having now, I trust, given a sketch of the ordinary American railroad car, sufficient to enable the reader to understand its general arrangement, I proceed to the more especial subject of my chapter—the American sleeping car—an admirable contrivance, peculiar to the New World.

Let me leave the Tennessee Railway, on which the opening of the chapter found me gliding towards the Mississippi, and bear my memory back to the line that runs from Albany to Buffalo, and which took me, awestruck even in anticipation, to the "big thunder water," Niagara.

Landing from the Hudson river steamer, I find myself, on a certain day after at a certain town with an Indian name—Schenectady—bound for Canada. It is about nine o'clock when I reach the station and go to secure a sleeping car for the night and to check my baggage.

The words "checking my baggage" remind me to make a few remarks on one of the best institutions in all America, and one which it will be to our infinite loss if we do not very soon universally adopt. I am going, say from Utica to Toledo (what a collocation of incongruous names), and I have three parcels—first, my portmanteau, black, with red diamonds—second, my blue hat-box—third, my wife, to quote an old and honoured joke of my excellent grandfather's. Do I direct them carefully on parchment? No! I arrive at the station and get my ticket, followed by a muscular negro, Cuffy by name, who carries my baggage. He then follows me to the luggage-van, and cries out:

"Massa George, gib 'un a check for Toledo for this jebbleman."

Massa George looks up from a chaos of luggage and answers to him:

"How many?"

"Two, and all going through."

"Two checks for Toledo—right?"

As he speaks, Massa Jack, the under conductor, selects four brass tickets with leather loops attached to them, which hang with some hundreds of others from his arms, and looping two on my luggage, hands me the two duplicates.

"2359"—"2617" are the figures on my tickets, and on producing them at Toledo to-morrow, or to-morrow six months, my black

portmanteau and blue hat-box will be handed to me. I shall find them, I know, as sure as there are slaves in America, with the brass labels, twins to mine, upon them. I shall call out to the porter or baggage-master, "2359—2617," and out will roll, as in a pantomime trick, my black and red portmanteau and my blue hat-box.

Presently, before the train starts, to return to the routine of the system, I shall hear Cuffy roar out: "Toledo, 2359—2617," and to him answering, will respond Sambo inside the luggage van portal: "Toledo, 2359—2617—right!" and at the same moment down go the numbers in the little note-book of the luggage man of Utica, who stands by the van near a blazing red lamp, that turns his face to currant-jelly, and whose business it is to check all luggage passing from Utica anywhere. You may go, in this restless country, nine hundred miles at a stretch, may change trains five times, may pass three nights on the road, yet never be troubled to look after your luggage once—nay, not even to bestow a random nervous thought upon it; guard safely 2359—2617, at Toledo or where not, and as sure as three and three make what is called six, the product will be 2617 and 2359. But I am going—say from Albany—at the head of the Hudson to Buffalo, near Lake Ontario. The conductor seeing me walk about the platform, and eye the several carriages, says to me with sagacious forethought, "Sleeping car, mister? Going through, stranger?"

I reply "Yes," and follow the quiet sorrow lean man into the last carriage, which is lettered in large red letters, on a sunflower yellow ground, "ALBANY AND BUFFALO SLEEPING CAR." I go in, and find the ordinary railway carriage; the usual filter, and the usual stove are there; and the seats, two-and-two, are arranged in the old quiet procession, turning their backs on each other glumly, after their kind. I ask how much extra I must pay for a bed.

"Single-high, twenty-five cents.; yes, sir," says the officer on duty. "Double-low, half a dollar; yes, sir."

I order a single-high (without at all knowing what I mean), and as I pay my twenty-five cents, the bell on the engine begins to get restless, and the steam horses snort and champ and struggle. Ten other persons enter, and order beds and pay for them, with more or less of expectation, regret, and wrangling.

More bell, more steam, smothering us all with white—a wrench, a drag, a jolt back half angry, as if the engine were sulky and restive, and we are off. The signal-posts stride by us, the timber-yards fly by, and we are in the open country, with its zig-zag snake fences, and Indian corn patches and piles of orange pumpkins. Now ladies come in from other carriages, for the restless or seeking traveller can walk all through an American train. We are seated in twos and twos, some at nuts, some at books, some flirting, some musing, some chaffing, some discussing "the irrepressible squabble," many chewing, or cutting plugs of tobacco from long

wedges, produced from their waistcoat-pockets. The candy boys have been round three times, the negro with the water-can twice, the lad with the book basket once. One hour from Albany, we are at Hoffman's; twenty minutes more, at Amsterdam; fifty minutes more, and we have reached Spraker's—pure Dutch names all, as though old Hudson christened them. Now, as we are between Little Falls and Herkimer, the officer of the sleeping cars enters, and calls out: "Now then, misters, if you please, get up from your seats, and allow me to make up the beds."

Two by two we rise, and with neat trimness and quick hand the nimble Yankee turns over every other seat, so as to reverse the back, and make two seats, one facing the other. Nimble he shuts the windows and pulls up the shutters, leaving for ventilation the slip of perforated zinc open at the top of each. Smartly he strips up the cushions, and unfastens from beneath each seat a light cane-bottomed frame, there secreted. In a moment, opening certain ratelhet holes in the wall of the carriage, he has slid these in at a suitable height above, and covered each with cushions and sleeping rug.

I go outside on the balcony, to be out of the way, and when I come back the whole place is transformed. No longer an aisle of double seats, like a section of a proprietary chapel put on wheels, but the cabin of a small steamer, snug for sleeping, with curtained berths and closed portholes.

O dexterous genius of Zenas Wallace and Ezra Jones, conductors of the New York Central Railway! The lights of the candle lamps are dimmed or withdrawn; a hushed stillness pervades the chamber of sleep; no sound breaks it but the clump of falling boots, and the button-slapping sound of coats flung upon benches. Further on, within a second enclosure, I hear voices of women and children. A fat German haberdasher, from Cincinnati, is unrobing himself for sleep. He takes off his "undress" as if he were performing a religious ceremony, and, indeed, sleep is a rehearsal of death, and seems rather a solemn thing, however we look at it.

The bottom berths are singularly comfortable. There is room to wander and explore, to roll and turn, and the curtains hush all sound, and keep off all inquisitive rays from Zenas's and Ezra's portable lamps. There is, indeed, twice the room I had in the Atlantic steamer that brought me over, for, in that berth, I could not sit up at night without bumping my head against No. 46's bed planks, and could not turn without pulling all the scant clothes off me. As for a heavy sea, why then there was no keeping in bed at all without being lashed in.

Now I mount my berth; for sleep is sympathetic, and when every one else goes to sleep, I must too. There are two berths to choose from: both wicker trays, ledged in, cushioned, and rugged: one about half a foot higher than the other. I choose the top one, as being nearer the zinc ventilator.

Several have turned in, and are now snorting approval of themselves, and of sleep as an institution generally. Others, like young crows balancing on the spring boughs, swing their Yankee legs, lean and yellow, from the wicker trays, and peel off their stockings, or struggle to get rid of their boots. A Mississippi man, in a faded green dress-coat and gilt buttons, undoes the blue ribbon that fancifully and romantically fastens his coat in front. A thin commercial traveller for a Philadelphia tobacco house, next him, is telling a story of American recklessness.

"After the late dreadful shipwreck of the Lady Elgin, on Lake Michigan, a terrible catastrophe in which I myself narrowly escaped being a sufferer, two survivors—one floating on a hencoop, the other on a cabin-door—washed up together for a moment. The wind roared its cruel requiem; the waves beat and raved. Did one wretched man cry, 'God save us!' and 'Amen!' the other? No.

"Says Colonel Junius Chitterden to Augustus Erastus Corning:

"A Roman punch would not be a bad thing now, mister!"

"Says Augustus Erastus Corning to Colonel Junius:

"No, darn me! but I'd rather have a mint julep."

"And then a great sea came and washed them angry apart. The colonel perished. Augustus Erastus was saved to partake of more mint juleps."

Laughing at this rather ghastly bit of fun, I clambered to my perch. The tray was narrow and high. It was like lying on one's back on the narrow plank thrown across a torrent. If I turned my back to the carriage wall, the motion bumped me off my bed altogether; if I turned my face to the wall, I felt a horrible sensation of being likely to roll down backwards, to be three minutes afterwards picked up in detached portions.

I lay on my back, and so settled the question; but then the motion! The American railroads are cheaply made and hastily constructed. They have often, on even great roads, but one line of rails, and that one line of rails is anything but even. Some years ago, the railroads in Virginia were so wretched that negroes were employed to run before the engine at certain risky places and nail down the "snake heads," as the loose jags of the sprung rails were called. Sleeping! It was like sleeping on a runaway horse.

Then the stoppages, the clashing of the bell on the engine at "Chittenanga," "Manlius," "Canton," "Jordan," "Canaseraga," and all the other places with Indian, classical, or scriptural names. Then, if I peered through the zinc ventilator into the outer darkness, a flying scud of sparks from the engine-funnel did not serve to divert my mind of all chances of being burnt. Then, there were blazes of pine-torches as we neared a station, fresh bell clamour and jumbling sounds of baggage, slamming doors, and itinerant conductors.

Erastus and Zenas, you talk of our English trains exceeding yours in speed! Why we are flying now, not gliding or rushing—among pine-trees and Indian corn patches, past glimmering white plank houses—jolting to and fro—swaying with high pressure, and the driver, I'll be sworn, sitting on the safety-valve, stimulated by juleps, spitting at the darkness, and roaring out,

"We're bound to run all night,

We're bound to run all day;

I bet my money on the bob-tailed mare,

Who will bet on the grey!"

And to him, red in the firelight, I know the gigantic negro stoker replies, with a ferocious scrap of an anti-Abraham-Lincoln-election song,

"O out in old Kentucky,

And in South farther down,

When the people take a fancy

That a rogue must leave the town,

O they ride him on a rail,

And it isn't very often

He comes back to tell the tale,

After riding on a rail!

After riding on a rail!"

Ever since I first saw New York gleaming white across the bay, I had heard the Irish newsboy every morning in Broadway, shouting of nothing but railway disasters, smashes and splinterings and burnings and runnings into. A dreadful accident down in "Illonoy" had particularly struck me as a warning; for there, while the shattered bodies were still being drawn from under the piles of shivered carriages, the driver on being expostulated with, had replied:

"I suppose this ain't the first railway accident by long chalks!"

Upon which the indignant passengers were with difficulty prevented from lynching the wretch; but he fled into the woods, and there for a time escaped pursuit.

But, two other railway journeys pressed more peculiarly on my mind; one was that of eight or ten weeks ago, from Canandaigua to Antrim. It was there a gentleman from Baltimore, fresh from Chicago, told me of a railway accident he had himself been witness to, only two days before I met him. The 2-40 (night) train from Toledo to Chicago, in which he rode, was upset near Pocahontas by two logs that had evidently been wilfully laid across the rails. On inquiry at the next station, it was discovered that a farmer who had had, a week before, two stray calves killed near the same place, had been heard at a liquor store to say he would 'pay them out for his calves.' This was enough for the excited passengers, vexed at the detention, and enraged at the malice that had exposed them to danger of death. A posse of them instantly sallied out, beleaguered the farmer's house, seized him after some resistance, put a rope round his neck, dragged him to the nearest tree, and would have then and there lynched him, had not two or three of the passengers rescued him, revolver in hand, and given him up to the nearest magistrate.

The second, was that long journey through the pine country of Carolina, where the sand



was so white and glaring, and the pines so grave and green. I had heard before, from old travellers, how fond cattle were of sunning on the unfenced American railroads, and I remembered how one early circumnavigator, shortly after Anson, describes the engineer and stoker amusing themselves all day in pelting the stray cows with billets from the wood-van. I was assured that the cow-catcher sometimes caught them up, but oftener got entangled with their broken legs, and so upset the train.

Unpleasant, therefore, it was, every twenty minutes, from Savannah to Charleston, to hear the droning whistle give notice of another cow, to feel the train slacken, almost stop—then a mile of fiercer and more staccato whistling—all ending in seeing a stolid yet worried cow striding along off the line into the woods, crashing through wild vines and butternuts, maple bushes and sassafras, and blundering over a fallen tree, and there quietly brandishing a wisp of a tail.

All these and similar thoughts entered my mind, as I lay on my back on that wicker shelf of "the American sleeping car," and in vain offered up prayers to the great black King Morpheus of the mandragora crown and ebon sceptre. No, swig-swig goes the car, rush, jolt, and now I begin to believe the old story of the stoker and engineer playing at cards all night, and now and then leaping the train over a "bad place," crying "Go ahead; let her rip!"

At last, a precarious and fragile sleep crusts me over, but, compared with real sleep it is but as the skim of ice on a water-jug compared with the thick-ribbed buttresses of an Arctic winter. It is like workhouse food; it keeps life together, but not amply or luxuriously. So, blessed daylight reluctantly and sullenly returns. One by one we wake up, yawn, and stretch ourselves. There is something suspicious in the haste with which we all flop out of bed, and no really comfortable bed was ever left with such coarse ingratitude. Presently, to us enter Zenas and Ezra, not to mention a fresh passenger from Corfu, regardless of the somewhat effete atmosphere of our carriage, and proceed to readjust the seats.

Beds, in a few minutes, will be invisible. Slide out those wicker trays—strip off the rugs and cushions—furl back those curtains—ratchet up to the roof those supporters—push in those underpinning bolts—click, jolt, they are chair seats once more. And now, through the open windows comes a draught of pure air, that freshens our frouzy and dishevelled crew.

Now, repair we to the washing-room, and the one dirty brush fastened to the wall by a chain, giving the whole place the appearance of the cell of a dead barber. We wash with scanty rinsings of water, always tilted up at one corner of the basin, as if we were in the desert and water was scarce on "t'other side of Jordan." I don't feel as if I had washed, or as if I had been asleep, but that is of no consequence: I feel tired, flabby, dusty, grimy, and low.

Let me, however, before I get to the breakfast station, still half a mile off, remember to mention that the second time I took a railway sleep-

ing car I really did sleep, and the third time I slept well. So much for habit; and, indeed, to commercial men, and men bound on swift unpostponable journeys, these sleeping cars are a great comfort and convenience: though in Canada (with a different tempered people) they have been tried and failed.

But now the great bell on the engine, clashes and swings; the deep-toned whistle, more like a bassoon than the ear-piercing screamer we use, sounds in angry gasps; we are near Buffalo, and breakfast.

We slacken and stop; and out we pour in hungry swarms. The five gongs of five opposition breakfast places, bang and thunder for our custom; five niggers at once cry:

"This way please, jebblemen, for de breakfast! Half-dollar a ed!"

In a minute I am seated with some thirty other hungry souls, stowing away white piles of hominy, pink shavings of corned beef, and bowls of stewed oysters. What time, a negro boy waves a plume brush of wild turkey feathers over my head, to keep off the greedy American flies, who are all republicans to a fly.

## A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

RESPECTABLE reader, there is no use in asking you if you have ever been in the Hotel of the "Balance," at Constance. Of course you have not. It is neither recorded in the book of John, nor otherwise known to fame. It is an obscure hostel, only visited by the very humblest wayfarers, and such poor offshoots of wretchedness as are fain to sleep on a truckle-bed and sup meanly. Vaterchen, however, spoke of it in generous terms. There was a certain onion soup he had tasted there years ago whose flavour had not yet left his memory. He had seen, besides, the most delicious schweine fleisch hanging down from the kitchen rafters, and it had been revealed to him in a dream that a solvent traveller might have rashes on demand.

Poor fellow! I had not the vaguest idea of the eloquence he possessed till he came to talk on these matters. From modest and distrustful, he grew assured and confident; his hesitation of speech was replaced by a fluent utterance and a rich vocabulary; and he repeatedly declared that though the exterior was unprepossessing, and the service generally homely, there were substantial comforts obtainable which far surpassed the resources of more pretentious houses. "You are served on pewter, it is true," said he; "but pewter is a rare material to impart relish to a savoury mess." Though we should dine in the kitchen, he gave me to understand that even in this there were advantages, and that the polite guest of the salon never knew what it was to taste that rich odour of the "roast," or that fragrant incense that steamed up from the luscious stew, and which were to cookery what bouquet was to wine.

"I will not," say that, [honoured sir," con-



tinued he, "to you, in the mixed company which frequent such humble hearths there would be matter of interest or amusement; but, to a man like myself, these chance companionships are delightful. Here all are stragglers, all adventurers. Not a man that deposits his pack in the corner and draws in his chair to the circle but is a wanderer and a pilgrim of one sort or other." He drew me an amusing picture of one of these groups, wherein, even without telling his story, each gave such insight into his life and travels as to present a sort of drama.

Whether it was that my companion had drawn too freely on his imagination, or that we had fallen on an unfortunate moment, I cannot say, but though we found the company at the Balance numerous and varied, there was none of the sociality I looked for, still less of that generous warmth and good greeting which he assured me was the courtesy of such places. The men were chiefly carriers, with their mule-teams and heavy waggons, bound for the Bavarian Tyrol. There was a sprinkling of Jew pedlars, on their way to the Vorarlberg; a deserter from the Austrian army, trying to get back to Hesse Cassel; and an Italian image carrier, with a green parrot and a well-filled purse, going back to finish his days at Lucca.

Now none of these were elements of a very exalted or exclusive rank; they were each and all of them taken from the very base of the social pyramid; and yet, would it be believed that they regarded our entrance amongst them as an act of rare impudence!

A more polished company might have been satisfied with averted heads or cold looks; these were less equivocal. One called out to the landlord to know if he expected any gipsies; another, affecting to treat us as solicitors for their patronage, said he had no "batzen" to bestow on buffoonery; a third suggested we should get up our theatricals under the cart-shed outside, and beat the drum when we were ready; and the deserter, a poor weak-looking, mangy wretch, with a ragged fatigue-jacket and broken boots, put his arm round Catinka's waist, to draw her on his knee, for the which she dealt him such a slap on the face as fairly sent him on the floor, in which ignoble position Vaterchen kicked him again and again. In an instant all were upon us. Carters, pedlars, and image man assailed us furiously. I suppose I beat somebody; I know that several beat *me*. The impression left upon me when all was over was of a sort of human kaleidoscope, where the people turned every way without ceasing. Now we seemed all on our feet, now on our heads, now on the floor, now in the air, Vaterchen flying about like a demon, while Tintefleck stood in a corner, with a gleaming stiletto in her hand, saying something in Calabrian, which sounded like an invitation to come and be killed.

The police came at last; and after a noisy scene of accusation and denial, the weight of evidence went against us, and we were marched off to

prison, poor old Vaterchen crying like a child for all the disgrace and misery he had brought on his benefactor; and while he kissed my hand, swearing that a whole life's devotion would not be enough to recompense me for what he had been the means of inflicting on me: Catinka took it more easily, her chief regret apparently being that nobody came near enough to give her a chance with her knife, which she assured us she wielded with a notable skill, and could, with a jerk, send flying through a door, like a javelin, at full six paces' distance; nor, indeed, was it without considerable persuasion she could be induced to restore it to its sheath, which truth obliges me to own was inside her garter. Our prison, an old tower adjoining the lake, had been once the dungeon of John Huss, and the torture chamber, as it was still called, continued to be used for mild transgressors, such as we were. A small bribe induced the gaoler's wife to take poor Tintefleck for the night into her own quarters, and Vaterchen and I were sole possessors of the gloomy old hall, which opened by a balcony, railed like a sort of cage, over the lake.

If the torture chamber had been denuded of its flesh pincers and thumbscrews, and the other ingenious devices of human cruelty, I am bound to own that its traditions as a place of suffering had not died out, as the fleas left nothing to be desired on the score of misery. Whether it was that they had been pinched by a long fast, or that we were more tender, cutaneously, than the aborigines, I know not, but I can safely aver that I never passed such a night, and sincerely trust that I may never pass such another. Though the air from the lake was cold and chilly, we preferred to crouch on the balcony to remaining within the walls, but even here our persecutors followed us.

Vaterchen slept through it all; an occasional convulsive jerk would show, at times, when one of the enemy had chanced upon some nervous fibre; but on the whole he bore up like one used to such martyrdom, and able to brave it. As for me, when morning broke, I looked like a strong case of confluent small-pox, with the addition that my heavy eyelids nearly closed over my eyes, and my lips swelled out like a Kaffir's. How that young mixt Catinka laughed at me. All the old man's signs, warnings, menaces, were in vain; she screamed aloud with laughter, and never ceased, even as we were led into the tribunal and before the dread presence of the judge.

The judgment-seat was not imposing. It was a long, low, ill-lighted chamber, with a sort of raised counter at one end, behind which sat three elderly men, dressed like master sweeps—that is, of the old days of climbing-boys. The prisoners were confined in a thing like a fold, and there leaned against one end of the same pen as ourselves a square-built, thick-set man of about eight-and-forty, or fifty, dressed in a suit of coarse drab, and who, notwithstanding an immense red beard and moustache, a clear blue eye and broad brow proclaimed to be English. He was being in-

terrogated as we entered, but from his total ignorance of German the examination was not proceeding very glibly.

"You're an Englishman, ain't you?" cried he, as I came in. "You can speak High Dutch, perhaps?"

"I can speak German well enough to be intelligible, sir."

"All right," said he, in the same free-and-easy tone. "Will you explain to those old beggars there that they're making fools of themselves. Here's how it is. My passport was made out for two; for Thomas Harpar, that's me, and Sam Rigges. Now, because Sam Rigges ain't here, they tell me I can't be suffered to proceed. Ain't that stupid? Did you ever here the like of that for downright absurdity before?"

"But where is he?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you, because you're a countryman, but I don't like blackening an Englishman to one of those confounded foreigners. Rigges has run."

"What do you mean by 'run'?"

"I mean, cut his stick; gone clean away; and what's worse, too, carried off a stout bag of dollars with him that we had for our journey."

"Whither were you going?"

"That's neither here nor there, and don't concern you in any respect. What you've to do is, explain to the old cove yonder—the fellow in the middle is the worst of them—tell him it's all right, that I'm Harpar, and that the other ain't here; or look here, I'll tell you what's better, do you be Rigges, and it's all right."

I demurred flatly to this suggestion, but undertook to plead his cause on its true merits.

"And who are you, sir, that presume to play the advocate here?" said the judge, haughtily. "I fancied that you stood there to answer a charge against yourself."

"That matter may be very speedily disposed of, sir," said I, as proudly; "and you will be very fortunate if you succeed as readily in explaining your own illegal arrest of me to the higher court of your country."

With the eloquence which we are told essentially belongs to truth, I narrated how I had witnessed, as a mere passing traveller, the outrageous insult offered to these poor wanderers as they entered the inn. With the warm enthusiasm of one inspired by a good cause, I painted the whole incidents with really scarcely a touch of embellishment, reserving the only decorative portion to a description of myself, whom I mentioned as an agent of the British government, especially employed on a peculiar service, the confirmation of which I proudly established by my passport setting forth that I was a certain "Ponto, Chargé des Dépêches."

Now, if there be one feature of continental life fixed and immutable, it is this, that wherever the German language be spoken, the reverence for a government functionary is supreme. If you can only show on documentary evidence that you are grandson of the man who made the broom

that swept out a government office, it is enough. You are from that hour regarded as one of the younger children of Bureaucracy. You are under the protection of the state, and though you be but the smallest rivet in the machinery, there is no saying what mischief might not ensue if you were either lost or mislaid.

I saw in an instant the dread impression I had created, and I said, in a voice of careless insolence, "Go on, I beg of you; send me back to prison; chain me; perhaps you would like to torture me? The government I represent is especially slow in vindicating the rights of its injured officials. It has a European reputation for long-suffering, patience, and forbearance. Yes, Englishmen can be impaled, burned, flayed alive, disembowelled. By all means, avail yourselves of your bland privileges; have me led out instantly to the scaffold, unless you prefer to have me broken on the wheel!"

"Will nobody stop him!" cried the president, almost choking with wrath.

"Stop me; I suspect not, sir. It is upon these declarations of mine, made thus openly, that my country will found that demand for reparation which will one day cost you so dearly. Lead on, I am ready for the block." And as I said this, I untied my cravat, and appeared to prepare for the headsman.

"If he will not cease, the court shall be dissolved," called out the judge.

"Never, sir. Never, so long as I live, shall I surrender the glorious privilege of that freedom by which I assert my birthright as a Briton."

"Well, you are as impudent a chap as ever I listened to," muttered my countryman at my side.

"The prisoners are dismissed, the court is adjourned," said the president, rising; and amidst a very disorderly crowd, not certainly enthusiastic in our favour, we were all hurried into the street.

"Come along down here," said Mr. Harpar. "I'm in a very tidy sort of place they call the Golden Pig. Come along, and bring the vagabonds, and let's have breakfast together."

I was hurt at the speech, but as my companions could not understand its coarseness, I accepted the invitation, and we followed him.

"Well, I ain't seen *your* like for many a day," said Harpar, as we went along. "If you'd have said the half of that to one of our 'Beaks,' I think I know where you'd be. But you seem to understand the fellows well. Mayhap you have lived much abroad?"

"A great deal. I am a sort of citizen of the world," said I, with a jaunty easiness.

"For a citizen of the world you appear to have strange tastes in your companionship. How did you come to foregather with these creatures?"

I tried the timeworn cant about seeing life in all its gradations—exploring the cabin as well as visiting the palace, and so on; but there was a rugged sort of incredulity in his manner that checked me, and I could not muster the glib readiness which usually stood by me on such occasions.

"You're not a man of fortune," said he, dryly,

as I finished; "one sees that plainly enough. You're a fellow that should be earning his bread somehow; and the question is—Is this the kind of life you ought to be leading? What humbug it is to talk about knowing the world, and such-like. The thing is, to know a trade, to understand some art, to be able to produce something, to manufacture something, to convert something to a useful purpose. When you've done, that the knowledge of men will come later on, never be afraid of that. It's a school that we never miss one single day of our lives. But here we are; this is the Pig. Now, what will you have for breakfast? Ask the vagabonds, too, and tell them there's a wide choice here; they have everything you can mention in this little inn."

An excellent breakfast was soon spread out before us, and though my humble companions did it the most ample justice, I sat there, thoughtful and almost sad. The words of that stranger rang in my ears like a reproach and a warning. I knew how truly he had said that I was not a man of fortune, and it grieved me sorely to think how easily he saw it. In my heart of hearts I knew it was the delusion I loved best. To appear to the world at large, an eccentric man of good means, free to do what he liked and go where he would, was the highest enjoyment I had ever prepared for myself: and yet here was a coarse, common-place sort of man—at least his manners were unpolished and his tone underbred—and he saw through it all at once.

I took the first opportunity to slip away unobserved from the company, and retired to the little garden of the inn, to commune with myself and be alone. But ere I had been many minutes there, Harpar joined me. He came up smoking his cigar, with the lounging, lazy air of a man at perfect leisure, and, consequently, quite free to be as disagreeable as he pleased.

"You went off without eating your breakfast," said he, bluntly. "I saw how it was. You didn't like *my* freedom with you. You fancied that I ought to have taken all that nonsense of yours about your rank and your way of life for gospel; or, at least, that I ought to have pretended to do so. That ain't my way. I hate humbug."

It was not very easy to reply good humouredly to such a speech as this. Indeed, I saw no particular reason to treat this man's freedom with any indulgence, and drawing myself haughtily up, I prepared a very dry but caustic rejoinder.

"When I have learned two points," said I, "on which you can inform me, I may be better able to answer what you have said. The first is: By what possible right do you take to task a person that you never met in your life till now? and, secondly, What benefit on earth could it be to me to impose upon a man from whom I neither want nor expect anything?"

"Easily met, both," said he, quickly. "I'm a practical sort of fellow, who never wastes time on useless materials; that's for your first proposition. Number two: you're a dreamer, and you hate being awakened."

"Well, sir," said I, stiffly, "to a gentleman so remarkable for perspicuity, and who reads character at sight, ordinary intercourse must be wearisome. Will you excuse me if I take my leave of you here?"

"Of course, make no ceremony about it; go or stay, just as you like. I never cross any man's humour."

I muttered something that sounded like a dissent to that doctrine, and he quickly added, "I mean, further than speaking my mind, that's all; nothing more. If you had been a man of fair means, and for a frolic thought it might be good fun to consort for a few days with rapscallions of a travelling circus, all one could say was, it wasn't very good taste; but being evidently a fellow of another stamp, a young man who ought to be in his father's shop or his uncle's counting-house, following some honest craft or calling—for you, I say, it was downright ruin."

"Indeed!" said I, with an accent of intense scorn.

"Yes," continued he, seriously, "downright ruin. There's a poison in the lazy, good-for-nothing life of these devils, that never leaves a man's blood. I've a notion that it wouldn't hurt a man's nature so much were he to consort with housebreakers; there's at least something real about these fellows."

"You talk, doubtless, with knowledge, sir," said I, glad to say something that might offend him.

"I do," said he, seriously, and not taking the smallest account of the impertinent allusion. "I know that if a man hasn't a fixed calling, but is always turning his hand to this, that, and t'other, he will very soon cease to have any character whatsoever; he'll just become as shiftless in his nature as in his business. I've seen scores of fellows wrecked on that rock, and I hadn't looked at you twice till I saw you were one of them."

"I must say, sir," said I, summoning to my aid what I felt to be a most cutting sarcasm of manner—"I must say, sir, that, considering how short has been the acquaintance which has subsisted between us, it would be extremely difficult for me to show how gratefully I feel the interest you have taken in me."

"Well, I'm not so sure of that," said he, thoughtfully.

"May I ask, then, how?"

"Are you sure, first of all, that you wish to show this gratitude you speak of?"

"Oh, sir, can you possibly doubt it?"

"I don't want to doubt it, I want to profit by it."

I made a bland bow that might mean anything, but did not speak.

"Here's the way of it," said he, boldly. "Riggs has run off with all my loose cash, and though there's money waiting for me at certain places, I shall find it very difficult to reach them. I have come down here on foot from Wildbad, and I can make my way, in the same fashion, to



Marseilles or Genoa; but then comes the difficulty, and I shall need about ten pounds to get to Malta. Could you lend me ten pounds?"

"Really, sir," said I, coolly, I am amazed at the innocence with which you can make such a demand on the man whom you have, only a few minutes back, so acutely depicted as an adventurer."

"It was for that very reason I thought of applying to you. Had you been a young fellow of a certain fortune, you'd have naturally been a stranger to the accidents which now and then leave men penniless in out-of-the-way places, and it's just as likely that the first thought in your head would be, 'Oh, he's a swindler. Why hasn't he his letters of credit or his circular notes?' But, being exactly what I take you for, the chances are you'll say: 'What has befallen him to-day may chance to me to-morrow. Who can tell the day and the hour some mishap may not overtake him? and so I'll just help him through it.'"

"And that was your calculation?"

"That was my calculation."

"How sorry I feel to wound the marvellous gift you seem to possess of interpreting character. I am really shocked to think that for this time, at least, your acuteness is at fault."

"Which means that you'll not do it?"

I smiled a benign assent.

He looked at me for a minute or more with a sort of blank incredulity, and then, crossing his arms on his breast, moved slowly down the walk without speaking.

I cannot say how I detested this man; he had offended me in the very sorest part of all my nature; he had wounded the nicest susceptibility I possessed; of the pleasant fancies wherewith I loved to clothe myself he would not leave me enough to cover my nakedness; and yet, now that I had resented his cool impertinence, I hated myself far more than I hated him. Dignity and sarcasm, forsooth! What a fine opportunity to display them, truly! The man might be rude and underbred; he *was* rude and underbred; and was that any justification for *my* conduct towards him? Why had I not had the candour to say, "Here's all I possess in the world; you see yourself that I cannot lend you ten pounds." How I wished I had said that, and how I wished, even more ardently still, that I had never met him, never interchanged speech with him!

"And why is it that I am offended with him—simply because he has discovered that I am Potts?" Now, these reflections were all the more bitter, since it was only twenty-four hours before that I had resolved to throw off delusion either of myself or others; that I would take my place in the ranks, and fight out my battle of life, a mere soldier. For this it was that I made companionship with Vaterchen, walking the high road with that poor old man of motley, and

actually speculating—in a sort of artistic way—whether I should not make love to Tintefleck! And if I were sincere in all this, how should I feel wounded by the honest candour of that plain-spoken fellow? He wanted a favour at my hands, he owned this; and yet, instead of approaching me with flattery, he at once assails the very stronghold of my self-esteem, and says, "No humbug, Potts; at least, none with *me*!" He opens acquaintance with me on that masonic principle by which the brotherhood of Poverty is maintained throughout all lands and all peoples, and whose great maxim is, "He who lends to the poor man, borrows from the ragged man."

"I'll go after him at once," said I, aloud. "I'll have more talk with him. I'm much mistaken if there's not good stuff in that rugged nature."

When I re-entered the little inn, I found Vaterchen fast asleep; he had finished off every flask on the table, and lay breathing stentoriously, and giving a long-drawn whistle in his snore, that smacked almost of apoplexy. Tintefleck was singing to her guitar before a select audience of the inn servants, and Harpar was gone!

I gave the girl a glance of rebuke and displeasure. I aroused the old man with a kick, and imperiously demanded my bill.

"The bill has been paid by the other stranger," said the landlord; "he has settled everything, and left a 'trenkgeld' for the servants, so that you have nothing to pay."

I could have almost cried with spite as I heard these words. It would have been a rare solace to my feelings if I could have put that man down for a rogue, and then been able to say to myself how cleverly I had escaped the snares of a swindler. But to know now that he was not only honest but liberal, and to think, besides, that I had been his guest—eaten of his salt—it was more than I well could endure.

"Which way did he take?" asked I.

"Round the head of the lake for Lindau. I told him that the steamer would take him there to-morrow for a trifle, but he would not wait."

"Ah me!" sighed Vaterchen, but half awake, and with one eye still closed, "and we are going to St. Gallen."

"Who said so?" cried I, imperiously. "We are going to Lindau; at least, if I be the person who gives orders here. Follow!" And as I spoke, I marched proudly on, while a slipshod, shuffling noise of feet, and a low, half-smothered sob, told me that they were coming after me.

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